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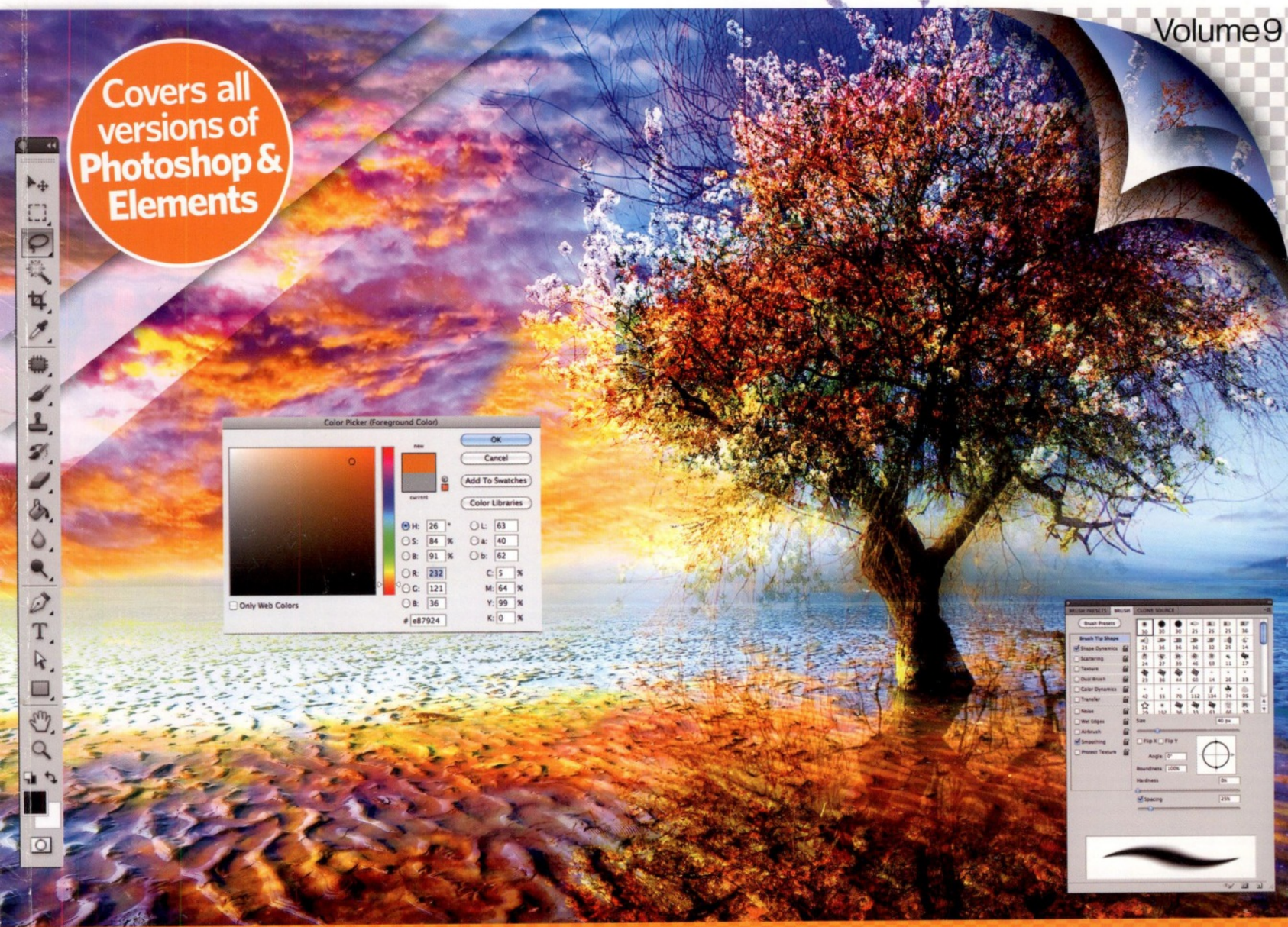
Volume 9

Covers all versions of Photoshop & Elements



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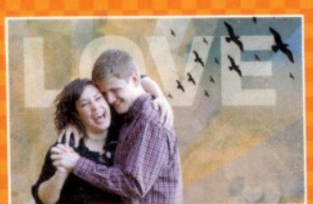

✔ Digital creations ✔ Top tool tips ✔ Inspirational features ✔ Paint effects

Welcome to Photoshop® creative collection

Adobe Photoshop is undoubtedly one of the most powerful image editing suites around. Making the most of its potential, however, can take practice, patience, and a little helping hand from Photoshop Creative Collection. Volume 9 brings you even more in-depth step-by-step tutorials and comprehensive features to help you get to grips with every area of Photoshop. We start with basic photo editing tips and tricks. From fixing an image's exposure to converting it to monochrome, there's so much here that will help you improve your shots. However, if you want to get a touch more creative, then check out our digital art section. As well as a complete guide to painting in Photoshop, you can produce stunning effects with custom brushes and create art with type. If you want to push things further still, our photomanipulation section takes it to the next level. Here you can find out how to achieve bizarre surreal effects and create incredible composites. We finish off with creative projects, which enable you to turn your images into posters, flipbooks, newspapers and more. Enjoy the book.

Photoshop® creative collection

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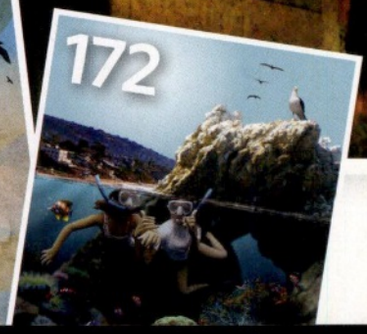
Take a trip back in time and visit the golden age of image making in Photoshop



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Fix any photo

Learn how to use some of Photoshop's basic editing tools to help transform your captures from average to amazing

Photoshop can be used to bring out the best in even the simplest of snapshots. There are a whole variety of adjustment tools and techniques that you can use to touch up, enhance or completely transform your shots. Over the next six pages we're going to show you how to get the most out of your images using some of the software's basic but essential enhancement and correction tools.

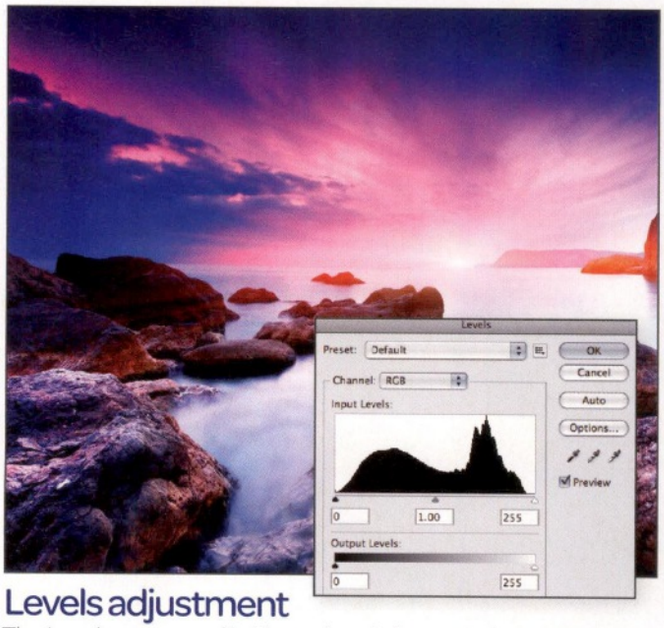
Follow along as we take you step by step through the ins and outs of image editing, with a selection of easy-to-follow tutorials. Covering how to correct some of the most common photo problems, you'll discover simple time-saving ways to improve your shots. You'll learn how to transform your colour captures by enhancing tonal range and increasing colour vibrancy with the Levels and Hue/Saturation commands and we'll show you how to remove unwanted objects from your image with the Clone Stamp and Crop tools. Finally, we'll cover sharpening using Photoshop's Unsharp Mask filter and how to get the perfect compositional balance with some clever techniques.

With plenty of practical steps and useful tips, you'll be able to follow along with your own images. Simply select a tutorial that applies and then carry it out carefully to correct your capture.

Balance your photographs and adjust composition
LAYERS
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Brightness/Contra...
Hue/Saturation 1
Levels 1
Background copy
Background
Use adjustment layers for non-destructive edits
SWATCHES
ADJUSTMENTS
Add an adjustment
Levels Presets
Curves Presets
Exposure Presets
Hue/Saturation Presets
Black & White Presets
Channel Mixer Presets
Selective Color Presets

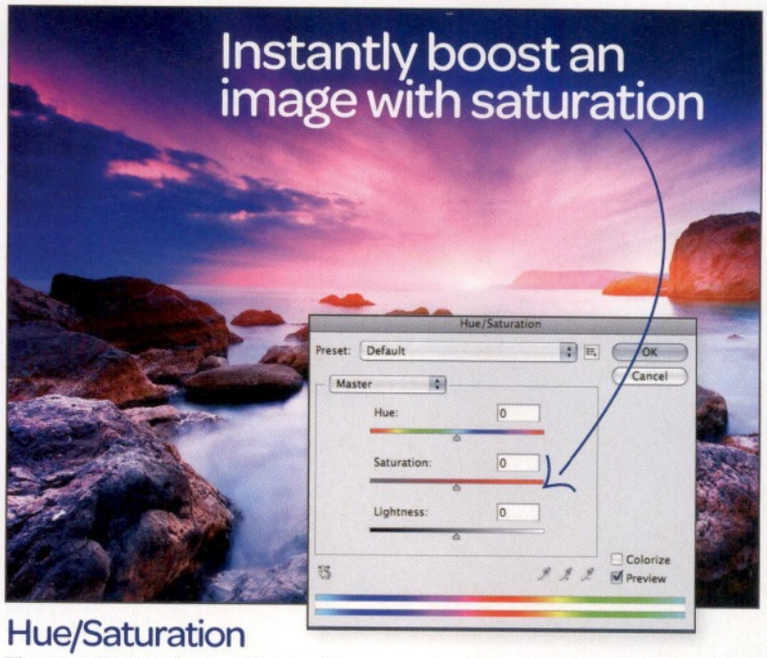
The tools An introduction

Five tools that will help you improve any photo



Levels adjustment

The Levels command in Photoshop is fantastic for improving the overall contrast and tonal range in your images. Users can select a specific RGB channel to edit then, using the Shadows, Midtones and Highlights sliders, enhance the intensity of the colour tones and contrast. A perfect tool for colour editing, Levels is also great for adding contrast to monochrome conversions for a bit more drama.

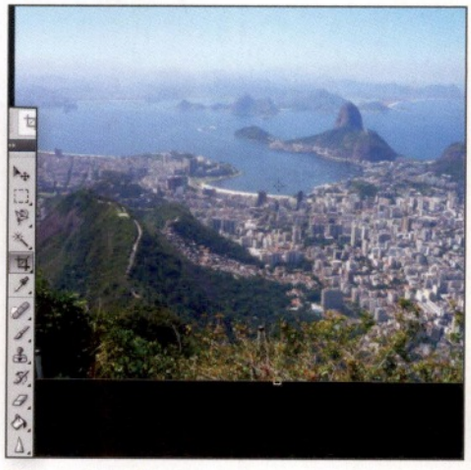


Hue/Saturation

The Hue/Saturation tool is ideal if you want to bring out the vibrancy of colour tones in your captures. Capable of increasing the colour saturation and adjusting hues, you can use it to enhance or alter specific tones within your image. Although great for adding a little more impact, this tool should be used sparingly to avoid oversaturated shots that appear posterised if you're going for photo-realism.

Clone Stamp tool

It's not uncommon to find unwanted items in your images, which you perhaps didn't notice when shooting. The Clone Stamp tool is perfect for correcting these mistakes and is often used to remove objects, blemishes and general dust marks from shots. If you have CS6, you can also use the new Content Aware Move and Patch tools, enabling you to magically remove objects using information from other areas of the image.



Crop tool

The Crop tool in Photoshop offers endless possibilities when it comes to changing your composition, whether you want to crop in at an angle or stick to the rules with the golden ration or rule of thirds, so there really are no limits. Photoshop CS6 users have even more choice, with extra cropping presets to ensure that the composition is as pleasing as possible.

Unsharp Mask

Unsharp Mask is one of Photoshop's more advanced sharpen filters. Perfect for bringing out the details in your shots, you can use the available Amount, Radius and Threshold sliders to control the sharpen effect. With a Preview screen in the dialog box, you can also check your adjustments while you work to avoid grainy results.

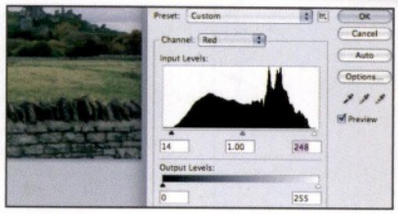
Enhance colour tones with Levels

Go for increased contrast and boosted colour for drama

Levels is a fantastic tool for increasing image contrast and bringing out specific colour tones. In this quick five-step tutorial we're going to show you how to use Levels to effectively enhance the colour and contrast in your shots. Follow along and find out just how easy it is to transform your photos from mundane to moody.

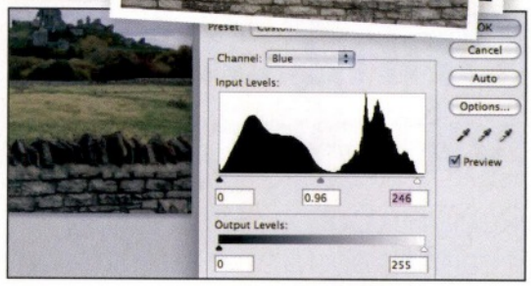
Prepare the layers

01 Open the image you want to enhance in Photoshop. Begin by duplicating the Background layer via Layer>Duplicate Layer, rename your new layer Levels and click OK. You can now select your new layer to activate it and go to Image>Adjustments>Levels.



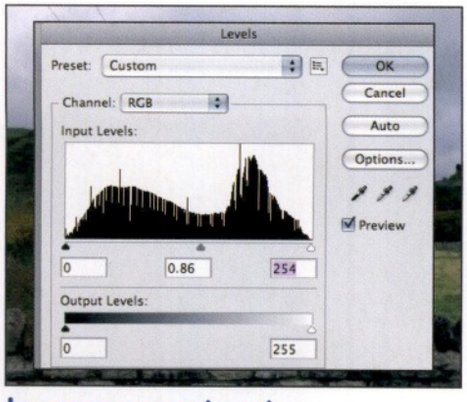
Adjust the Red channel

02 In the Levels dialog box select Preview to check the results of each adjustment you make. Select Red in the Channels drop-down menu and begin adjusting the red tones in the image by dragging the Shadows slider up to where the mountainous range begins to build. Do the same to the Highlights slider.



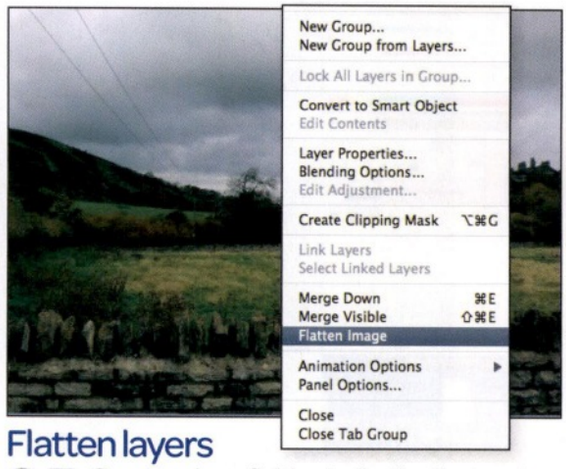
Adjust the Blue & Green channels

03 You can now select Green and then Blue from the channels drop-down menu and do the same as before. You may find that one or two channels only need one slider dragged in, as the mountainous range may already be pressed close against the other.



Increase contrast

04 You can now go back to the RGB channel to adjust the overall image contrast. To add in darker shadows or create stronger highlights, adjust the appropriate sliders. For a punchier overall contrast result, however, simply adjust the Midtones slider.



Flatten layers

05 Once you have finished adjusting the tonal range in your shot, you can flatten the layers via Layers>Flatten Image. You can now save your final image as a JPEG and share the edited result with friends and family.

Expert tip

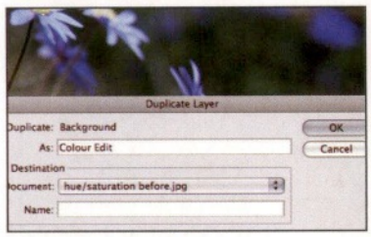
White balance

You can also use Levels to correct white balance or remove colour casts in your shots. These kind of defects can really detract from your subject, but are relatively easy to tweak with a little know-how. To do this, select the middle grey point dropper tool in the Levels dialog box and click on a grey (colourless) area in your image. Photoshop will then use this as a reference point to neutralise the cast and remove those pesky halos that cameras can produce.

Bring out vibrancy

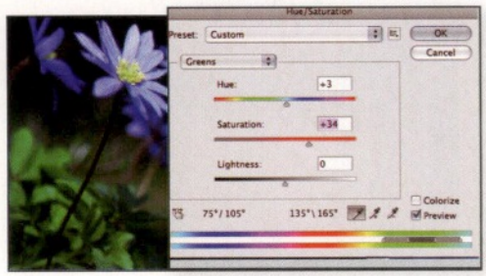
Reclaim your colours by using channels and a quick adjustment

It's not uncommon for some colour shots to lack a little vibrancy. It's often noticeable in captures that have been taken under bright sunlight with colours appearing washed out and a lot less saturated than in real life, not doing your subjects justice at all. There are, however, plenty of ways to improve this using Photoshop and the Hue/Saturation tool. Follow along and find out how you can vamp up your own colour captures.



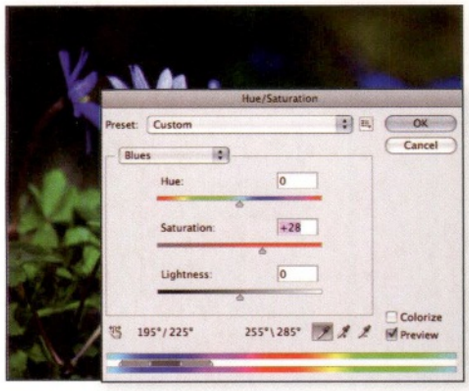
Duplicate the layer

01 To begin, open your saturation-lacking shot in Photoshop and create a new separate layer via Layer>Duplicate Layer>Colour Edit. Now click on your new layer to activate it and go to Hue/Saturation to begin the colour transformation.



Select a channel

02 In the dialog box, select the Preview button to check changes as you adjust your image. Now select green from the Channel drop-down menu to enhance just the green colour tones. Adjust the Hue slider slightly to vamp up the tones and increase the Saturation slider for impact.



Bring out the hues

03 To bring out the petals, switch the colour channel over to Blue and then increase the Saturation slider for a punchier effect. You can also increase the saturation of the yellow tones to balance out the colours in the flower.

Brighten it up

04 To bring out the colour adjustments, go to Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast. Increase both sliders very slightly to brighten up the scene and bring out the vibrancy. Flatten your layers and save your final shot.

Expert tip

Colour control

The Hue/Saturation adjustment tool also comes with a set of creative preset effects including Cyanotype and Old Style. These set the various options within the adjustment to reflect their specific type and can be a quick way to some interesting effects. Select one of them from the Preset drop-down menu in the dialog box. You can then use this as a starting point, which you can customise further using the Hue, Saturation and Lightness sliders.

Expert tip

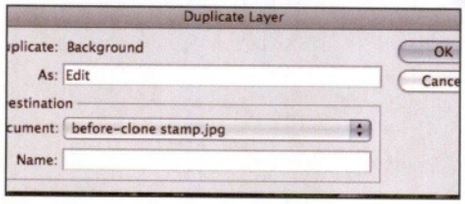
The Clone Stamp

The Clone Stamp tool is not only fantastic for removing unwanted items, but can also be used to retouch and repair images. Ideal for removing the odd lens spot from your photos, it can also be used to retouch skin in portraits and repair damaged photo prints that have been scanned into your computer.

Remove unwanted objects

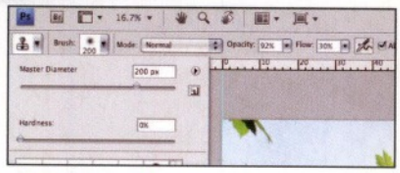
Magic away awkward elements from your images with Photoshop

When reviewing your captures on the computer screen, you can suddenly become all too aware of unwanted objects in the frame that you perhaps didn't see before when composing your shot. Fortunately Photoshop has plenty of easy-to-use tools that can help rid your images of unwanted items. Follow along as we show you how it's done in just six simple steps using the Clone Stamp tool.



Prepare the layers

01 Open the image you want to remove an object or distracting element from. To preserve the original image, duplicate the Background layer first via Layer>Duplicate Layer. Rename your new layer Edit and click on it to activate and edit.

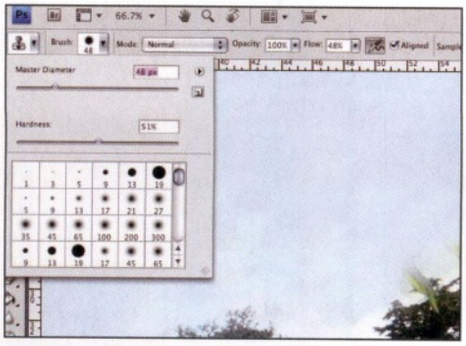


Prepare the tool

02 You can now select the Clone Stamp from the tools menu on the left-hand side of the screen. To remove the object, select a suitable round brush size and opt for a soft edge with a high Opacity setting around 80-100%.

Clone out

03 Zoom in close to the object you want to remove. Place the Clone Stamp cursor over a clear space next to the object and hold down the Alt/Opt key while right-clicking to clone the clear area. You can now begin brushing over the object to remove it.



Refine the edges

04 In shots like these you'll frequently find the object you want to remove is near areas you don't want to clone out. To avoid removing these areas, shrink your bush size down and work slowly around them. If unavoidable, don't worry, you can always clone them back in.

Crop in

05 Once you've removed obvious unwanted objects, you may find there are still a few things in the frame that are not as easy to clone out. To remove them, use the Crop tool and adjust your composition. Select the entire image and slowly drag one of the corner anchor points up to create a tighter selection then click OK.

Flatten and save

06 Once you've finished removing unwanted objects and cropped in to your capture, you can flatten the adjustment layers via Layers>Flatten Image. Now save your final corrected shot as a JPEG and you're done.

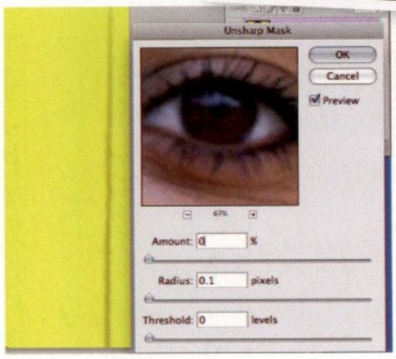
Sharpen your shots

Get crisp, clear focus with Photoshop's filters

Most shots need some level of sharpening out of camera and often images will appear soft as a result of shooting with the wrong settings or equipment. Fortunately Photoshop provides plenty of sharpening tools that can help ensure your images are pin-sharp before print. Follow along as we show you how to use the Unsharp Mask filter and Sharpen brush successfully with our portrait image.

Build layers

01 It's essential that your portrait shots are sharp, especially in the face, as the eyes are what draw the viewer to the image. To begin adjustments, duplicate your original layer first via Layer>Duplicate and rename it Sharpen.

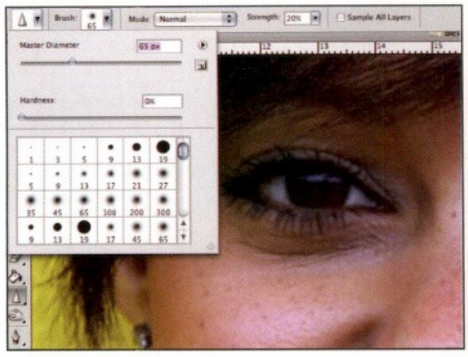


Unsharp Mask

02 To sharpen the entire image, first go to Filter>Sharpen> Unsharp Mask. Select Preview in the dialog box to check adjustments and zoom in to an area of the image where you will see a result.

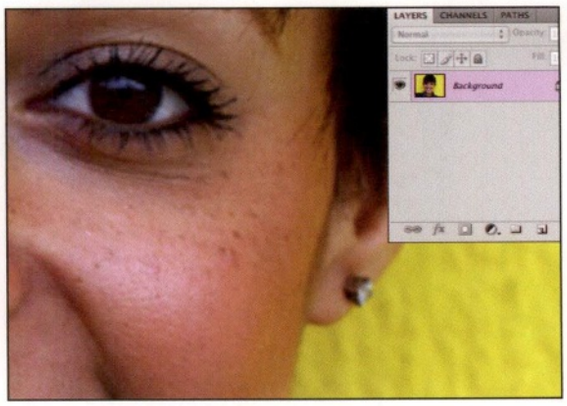
Sharpen Amount

03 Now slowly drag the Amount slider up to around 90-120% to ensure the entire image will be sharpened. You can bring the Radius slider up to around 3.5px but keep your Threshold setting low to help prevent grain.



Sharpen brush

04 Once you have sharpened the entire image, you can begin sharpening more specific areas such as the eyes. Zoom in close to your subject's eyes and select the Sharpen tool from the Toolbar. Adjust the brush size to suit the subject's pupils and select a soft edge.



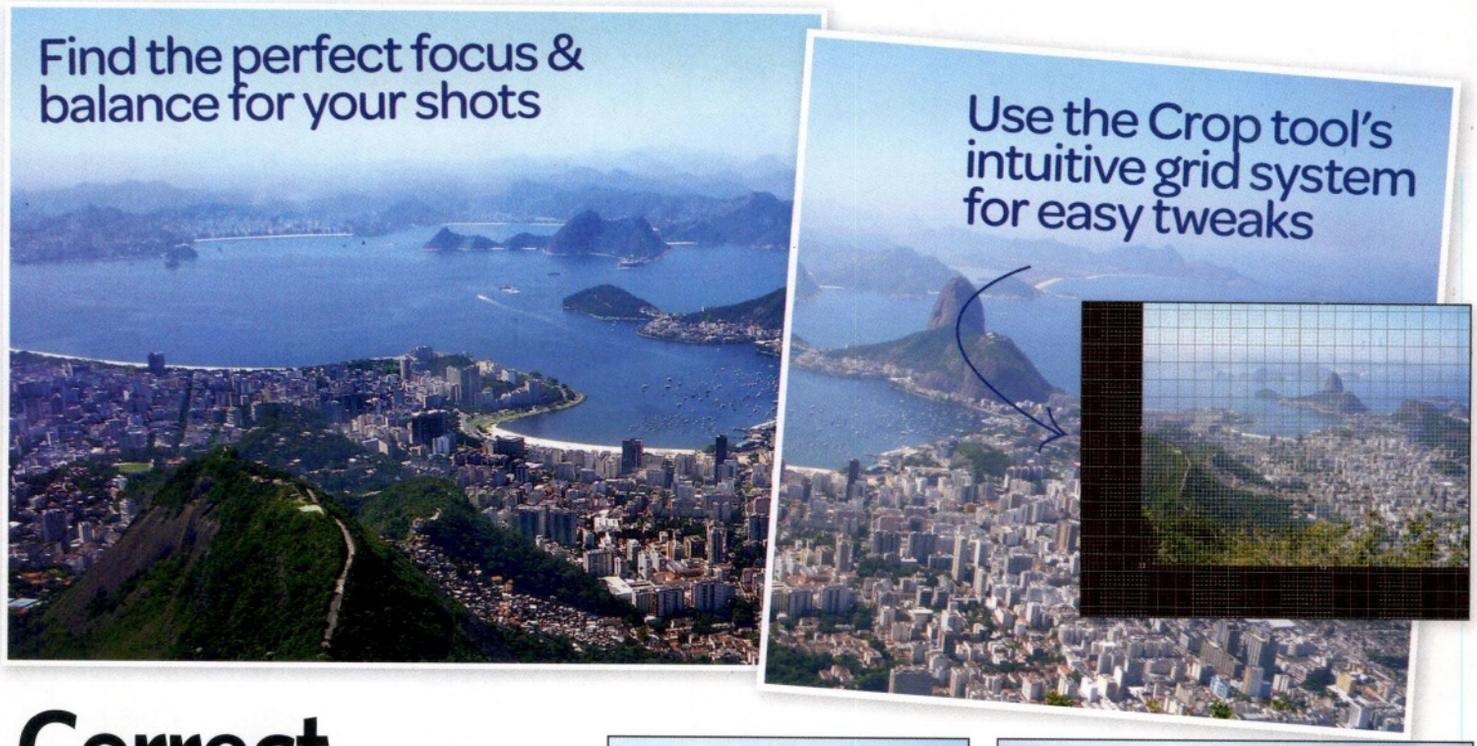
Brighten eyes

05 Set a relatively high Strength around 20%. You can now slowly begin to brush over the eyes to sharpen them up with more control as well as any other areas that need it. Finally, flatten your image layers and save your newly sharpened shot.

Expert tip

Smart Sharpen

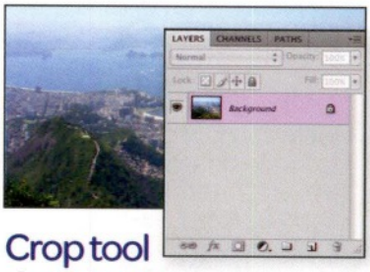
Although Unsharp Mask will sufficiently sharpen your shots most of the time, there are some exceptions. Images that have a slight lens or motion blur, for example, can be harder to correct. For more control, use the Smart Sharpen filter via Filters>Smart Sharpen. Select an appropriate option from the Remove drop-down menu to correct. You can then use the Amount and Radius sliders the same way as before to get pin-sharp, blur-free shots.



Correct composition

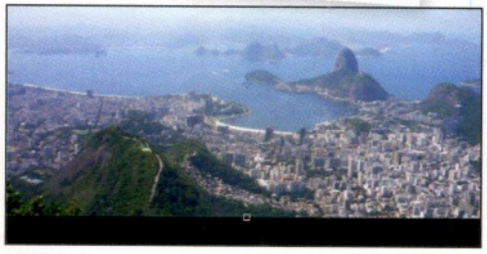
The perfect photograph could be just a crop and a clone away

In Photoshop it's easy to correct, adjust or even completely alter the composition of your shot using the Crop tool. Offering maximum flexibility and plenty of creative freedom, the many crop options shouldn't be overlooked. In this simple four-step tutorial, we're going to show you how to use it to enhance your image by removing unwanted space so that you can select a new focal point within the frame.



Crop tool

01 This image has a lot of distracting elements in the foreground that would be impossible to clone out. By using the Crop tool, we can put the focus of the image back onto the skyline. Select it and make a selection of the entire image.

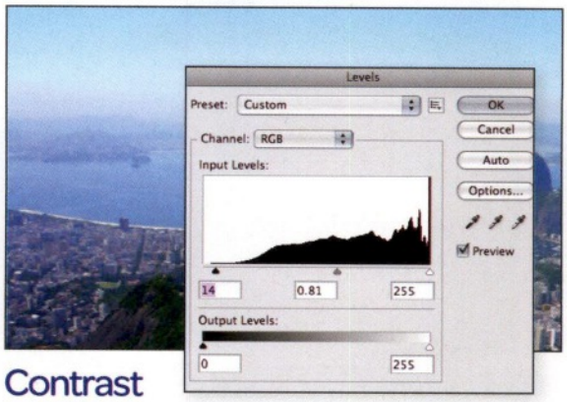


Make a selection

02 To ensure you don't lose some of the interest in the skyline, create a pano crop by dragging just the bottom middle slider up past the bushes in the foreground. You may notice details from the foreground still appear in the corners of the frame, so remove them using the Clone Stamp.

Clone out

03 Adjust the Clone Stamp's brush size and select a high opacity. You can clone a clear area next to what you want to remove by holding down the Alt/Opt key and then begin brushing lightly over the area until it's completely removed.



Contrast

04 As the new crop image is essentially the background of the original shot, the camera will have focused on exposing the foreground better. To improve exposure and contrast in your shot, use the Levels command via Image>Adjustments>Levels and pull in the Shadows and Midtones slider until pleased with the results.

Expert tip

Crop by the rules

To maintain image proportions when cropping, hold down the Shift key as you drag up one of the corner anchor points. This way you can crop your image to a perfect square or rectangle more easily. You can also activate a grid via View>Show>Grid in order to get some guidance if you would like to crop in and use the rule of thirds or golden ratio for your composition, or if you are just looking to crop along a particular straight line.

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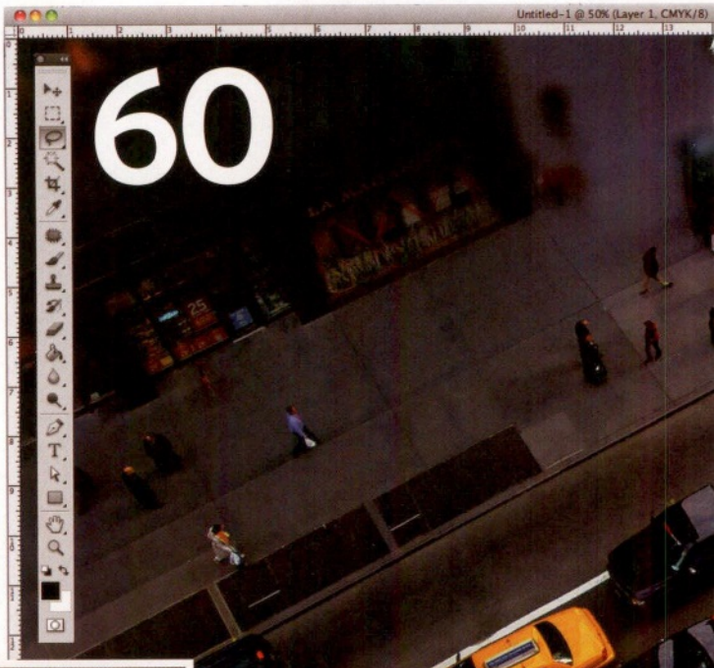
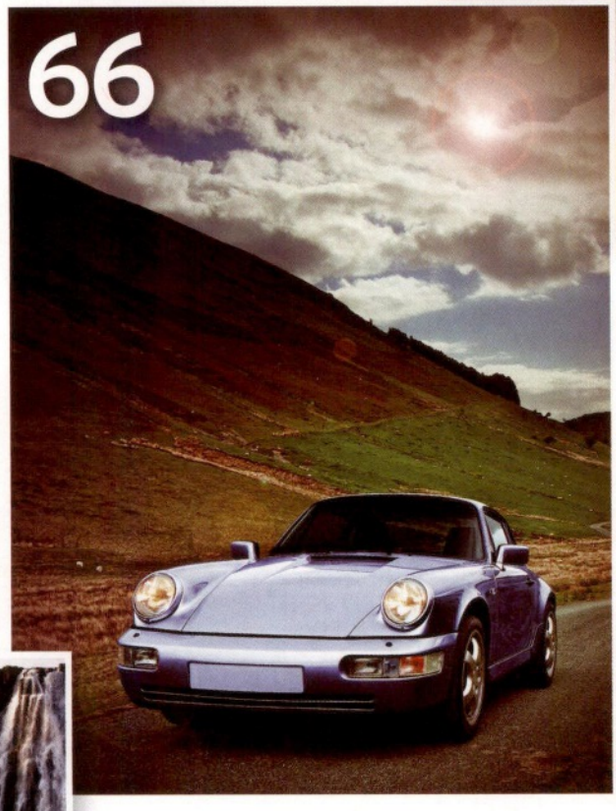
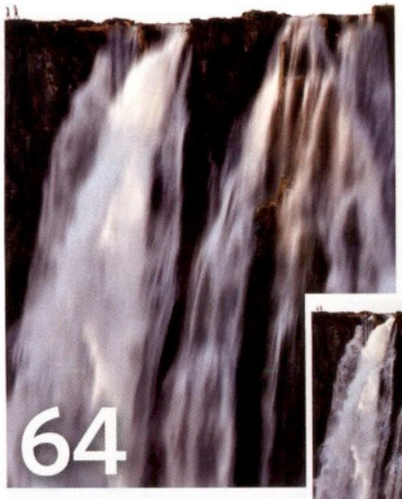
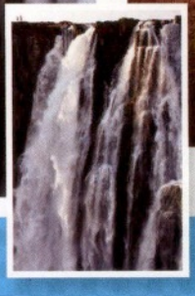
80 Perfect macros
Use Elements to add stunning layered macro effects

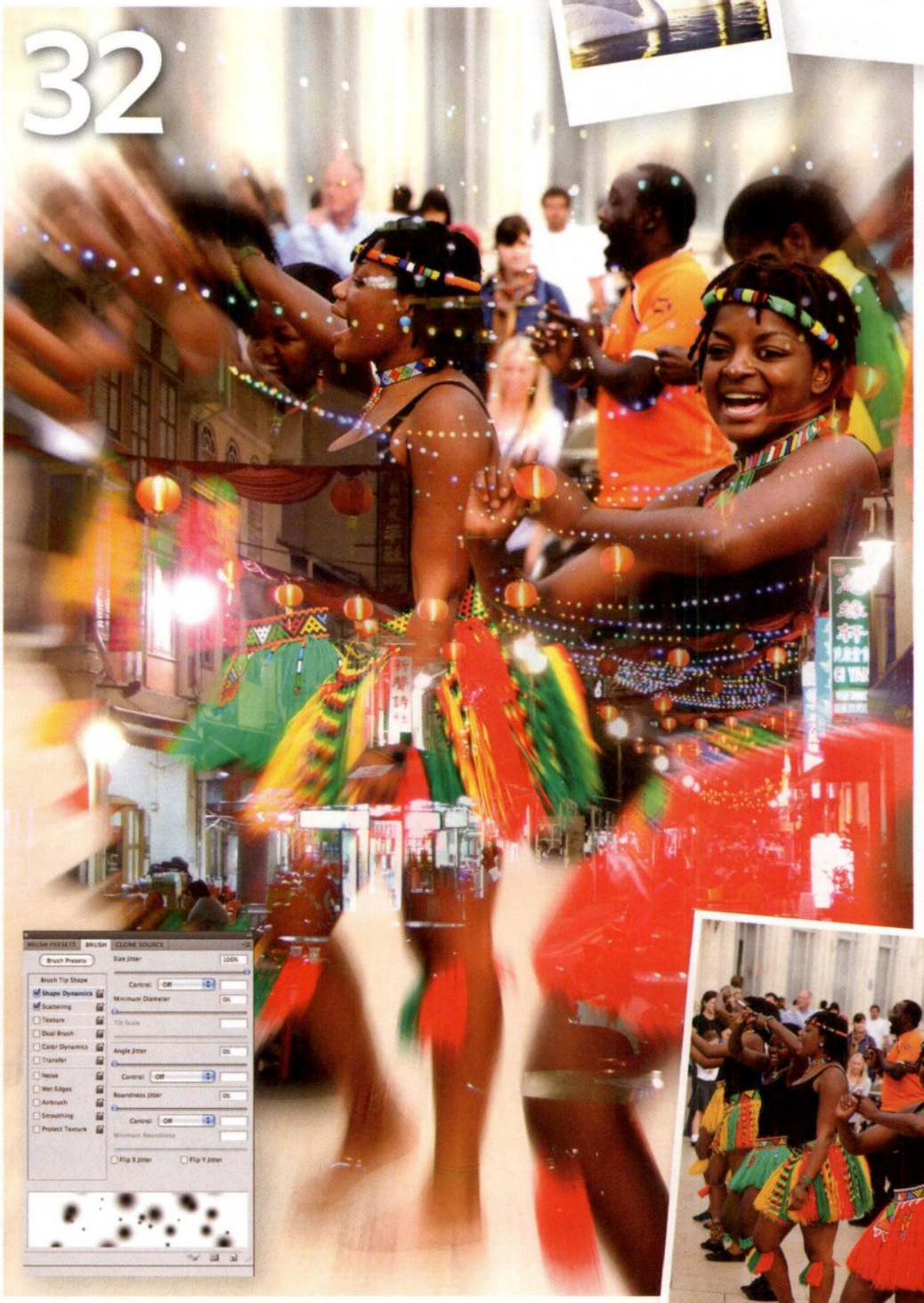








"Discover how to do the basics of photo retouching"



Improve any image with filters

Get to grips with the best Photoshop filters for incredible revamped photographs

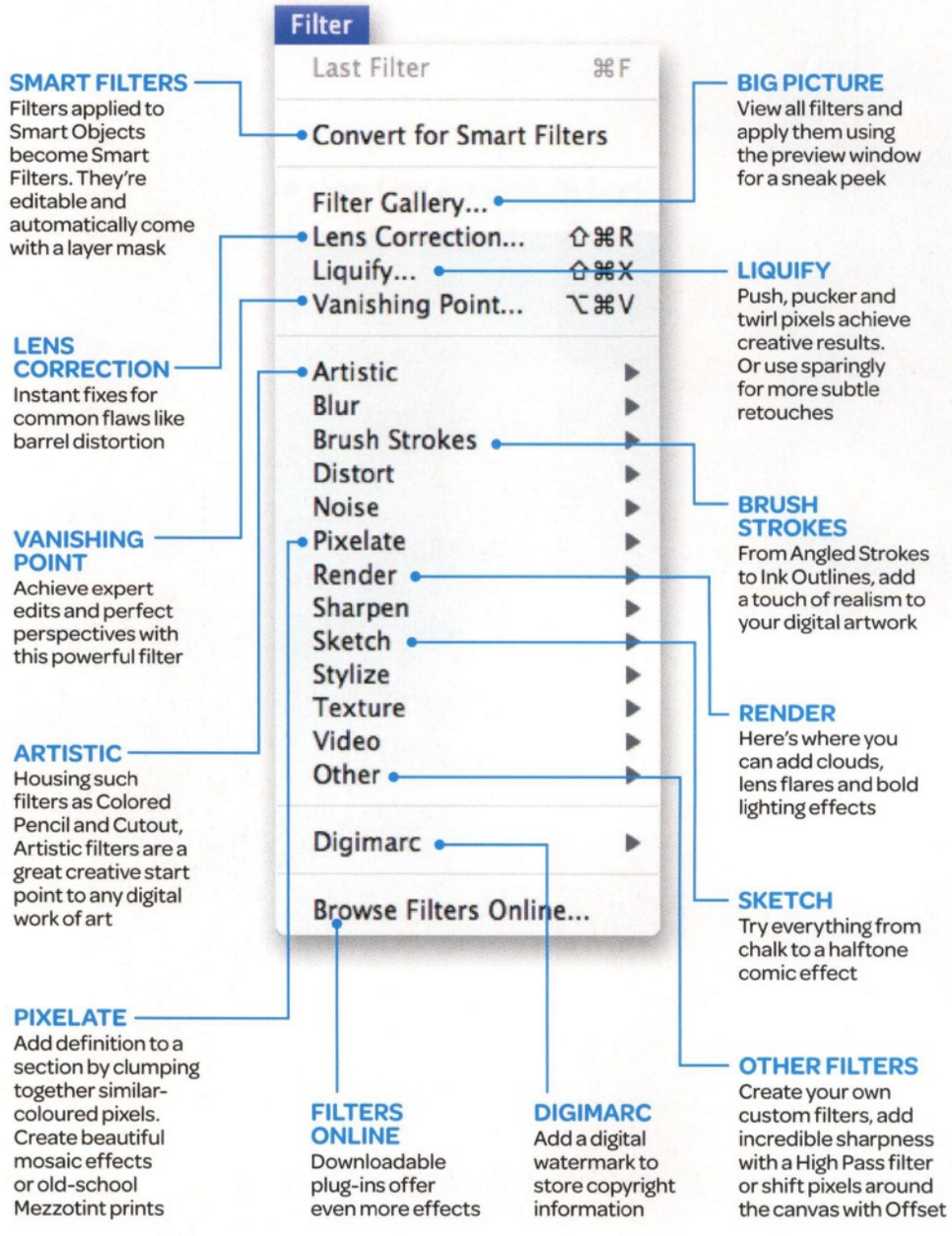
Filters are a Photoshop fundamental and, with over 100 to choose from, they allow for an incredible array of results. Some can be used to fix photographic problems like blur and noise, and others can be used for digital art. You can apply filters to your whole image or just sections within it, but working with more than one usually gives better results. Ensure you do so with each filter on a new layer though (a duplicate of the previous) so as to build up your composition in a less destructive manner. This way you can adjust the opacity and blend mode of a layer, and the effects of the filter can be varied.

> "The Filter Gallery allows you to preview your effects in a whole new workspace"

Filters don't work on Bitmap or Indexed Color files though, and some will only work on RGB documents. To save the hassle of some not loading, work in RGB mode from the start (Image>Mode>RGB Color).

Once selected, a filter will be applied to the active layer or selection. Some are applied instantly, some will open a small dialog window where you can adjust the intensity of the filter, and some will launch the Filter Gallery. The Filter Gallery allows you to preview your effects in a whole new workspace. It also means you can apply multiple filters at once.

Here you'll learn how to achieve real-media effects like pencil or paint, and discover how to do the basic essentials of photo-retouching. But do remember that these are the filter basics. Build upon the skills you learn here, experiment with different effects and imagery and become a certified filter pro!


Filter
Last Filter ⌘F
Convert for Smart Filters
Filter Gallery...
Lens Correction... ⇧⌘R
Liquify... ⇧⌘X
Vanishing Point... ⌥⌘V
Artistic
Blur
Brush Strokes
Distort
Noise
Pixelate
Render
Sharpen
Sketch
Stylize
Texture
Video
Other
Digimarc
Browse Filters Online...
SMART FILTERS
Filters applied to Smart Objects become Smart Filters. They're editable and automatically come with a layer mask
LENS CORRECTION
Instant fixes for common flaws like barrel distortion
VANISHING POINT
Achieve expert edits and perfect perspectives with this powerful filter
ARTISTIC
Housing such filters as Colored Pencil and Cutout, Artistic filters are a great creative start point to any digital work of art
PIXELATE
Add definition to a section by clumping together similar-coloured pixels. Create beautiful mosaic effects or old-school Mezzotint prints
FILTERS ONLINE
Downloadable plug-ins offer even more effects
DIGIMARC
Add a digital watermark to store copyright information
BIG PICTURE
View all filters and apply them using the preview window for a sneak peek
LIQUIFY
Push, pucker and twirl pixels achieve creative results. Or use sparingly for more subtle retouches
BRUSH STROKES
From Angled Strokes to Ink Outlines, add a touch of realism to your digital artwork
RENDER
Here's where you can add clouds, lens flares and bold lighting effects
SKETCH
Try everything from chalk to a halftone comic effect
OTHER FILTERS
Create your own custom filters, add incredible sharpness with a High Pass filter or shift pixels around the canvas with Offset

Improve any image with filters

PAINT WITH FILTERS
Don't just use preset filters to colour in your images, build your Layers palette with images applied with several for the best overall results

INK OUTLINES
Achieving ink outlines can be done several ways, one of which is to use the Accented Edges filter

BOOST VIBRANCY
Duplicate the main image (Background layer) and add filters like Poster Edges for extra intensity, then lower the Opacity for a subtler result

MAKE IMAGES POP
Add an interesting retro effect with the Color Halftone filter. We'll show you how on page 26

CREATIVE COLOURING
The Colored Pencil filter adds realistic lines of colour. Change the background of your image to get a parchment paper effect. Follow our guide to pencilled perfection on page 23

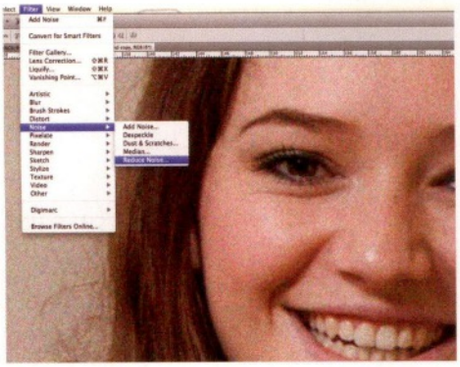
REAL-MEDIA STYLES
Consider what you'd use if you were creating a real painting. For example, in paintings you can often see the pencil marks under the paint. So run a Sketch filter along with a Watercolor filter for a realistic result

Perfect retouches

Fix your portraits with Photoshop's filters

When people think of filters, they think of painterly effects, artistic manipulations and creative outcomes. However, let's not forget the practical uses of filters. The ability to fix, repair and revitalise photos makes filters some of the most important tools that Photoshop has to offer. For example, Unsharp Mask is often the go-to tool for eradicating common blurring problems in digital photographs. Providing that the image hasn't been tinkered with first, a good Amount to set it to is 250% for a full-size screen or 350% if you're wanting to print it out. Set the Radius to 2.0 and tweak the Threshold to lessen the effect.

Remove noise Turn the volume down a little



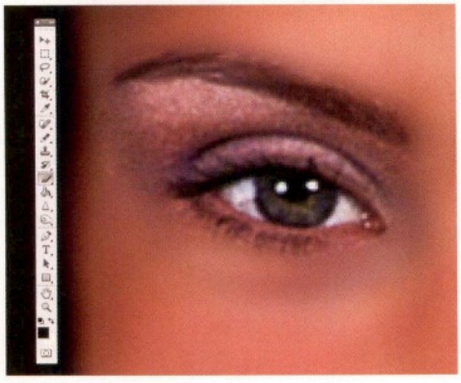
Kick off with a filter

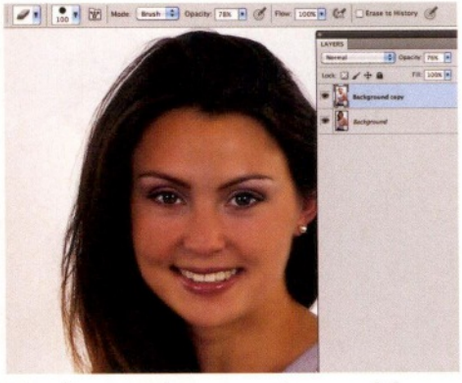
01 Head over to Filter>Noise>Reduce Noise to get cracking with your noisy photo. The values that you set will depend on your image. Adjust the sliders until you've reached a good compromise between sharpness and preserving detail.

Bring back the detail

02 Once you've applied the filter, use the Eraser tool (E) to rub out important areas where noise is less visible but detail is needed, like the eyes. Use a low Opacity and also try the Burn tool (O) to bring out other details too.

Improve skin tone Three steps to smooth skin





Begin with blur

01 Duplicate the start photo by dragging the Background layer onto the New Layer icon. On this duplicated layer, head to Filter>Gaussian Blur and apply a blur of around 4-5 pixels.

Rub it out

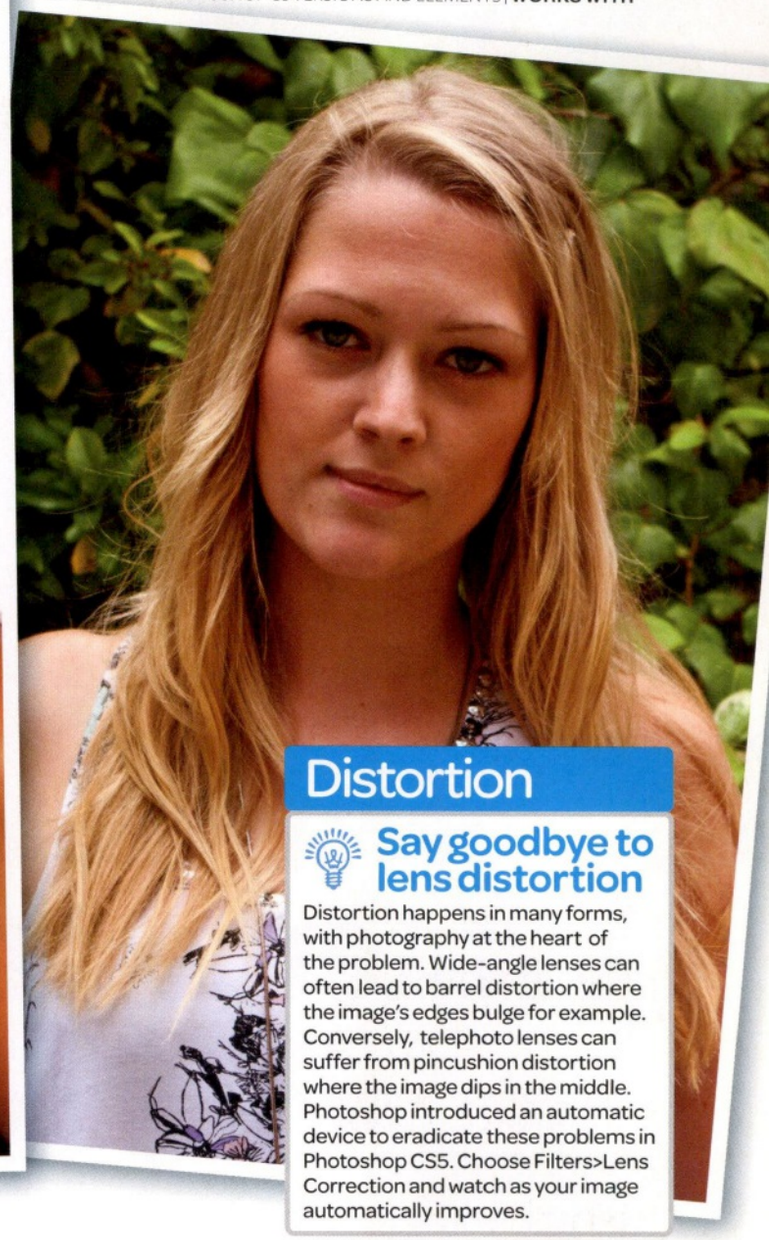
02 Now select the Eraser tool and set it to an Opacity of 50-60% (try it out to get the value you're happy with). Begin to rub out the blur over facial features like the eyes, eyebrows, teeth and lips to bring back the important detail.

The importance of opacities

03 Increase the Opacity and brush Size of your Eraser accordingly to rid the blur from anywhere else that isn't the skin. To finish up, adjust and reduce the Opacity of this layer a little so as to make the beautiful blur a little more subtle.

Improve any image with filters

PHOTOSHOP CS VERSIONS AND ELEMENTS | **WORKS WITH**



Distortion

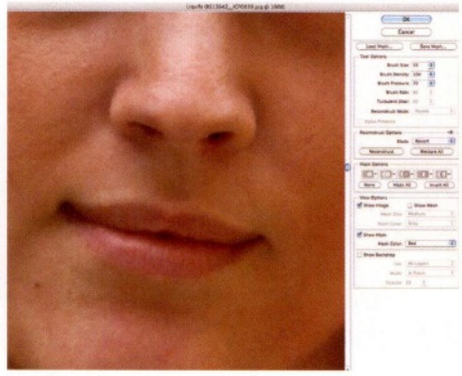
Say goodbye to lens distortion

Distortion happens in many forms, with photography at the heart of the problem. Wide-angle lenses can often lead to barrel distortion where the image's edges bulge for example. Conversely, telephoto lenses can suffer from pincushion distortion where the image dips in the middle. Photoshop introduced an automatic device to eradicate these problems in Photoshop CS5. Choose Filters>Lens Correction and watch as your image automatically improves.

Cheer up Subtle edits to retouch smiles

Learn to liquify

01 It's tempting to go overboard with the Liquify filter and create very drastic effects. Used subtly, though, it can alter facial expressions realistically and with natural results. Start by heading to Filter>Liquify to open the preview window.



Don't just drag

02 Use Forward Warp (W) to carefully push areas around the corners of the mouth up and outwards. Resist the temptation to drag the pixels and warp a new mouth – the pixels will blur and the effect will look like an obvious edit.

Not just in the lips

03 It's not just the mouth that makes a smile – the eyebrows are a good indicator too. In the same way, carefully push the inside of each brow upwards and extend the outer edge slightly, reshaping them to give a softer expression.

5 mins

Watercolor

Turn a photo into a work of art in minutes

Photoshop has a lot of great filters that provide instant effects, but it's actually the clever combination of a few different ones that achieve the best results. Using the Watercolor filter, for example, provides an instant painterly effect but, on its own, it isn't necessarily enough. Use Watercolor along with the Paint Daubs filter and a spot of Gaussian blur, however, and you've achieved a beautiful watercolour in a matter of minutes. A spot of clever blending is essential too. Experiment by using different filters with different blend modes for the ultimate in digital painting.

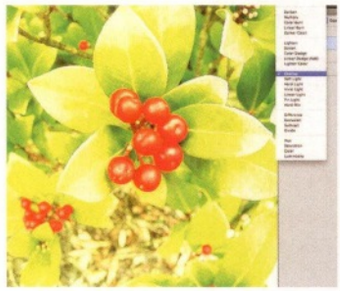
Expert tip

Under pressure

When you paint from scratch using the Brush tool, or add in detail manually, you could consider using either a tablet or a regular mouse. But what if you don't have a tablet? The key difference with a tablet is that they're pressure sensitive. However, Photoshop does have a Pen Pressure option, allowing mouse-users to produce more fluid strokes.

Paint up

01 Start by choosing Filter>Artistic>Paint Daubs. Use a Brush Size of 8, Sharpness of 38 and ensure the Brush Type is set to Simple. Name this layer Paint Daubs. This gives our base image some texture to kick things off.



A layer of colour

02 Make your Foreground colour a pale yellow and Background colour white. Now, using the Gradient tool (G), draw a line from the top left to the bottom right on a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N). Set the blend mode to Overlay.

The next filter

03 Duplicate the Paint Daubs layer (Ctrl/right-click and then Duplicate Layer). Hit Filter>Artistic>Watercolor. Set Brush Detail to 14, Shadow Intensity to 0 and Texture to 1. Change the layer's blend mode to Overlay and Opacity to 70%.

Gaussian Blur

04 Now duplicate the watercolour layer and change the new layer's blend mode to Hue. Head to Filter> Gaussian Blur and move the slider to 40.1, giving a nice paint bleed to authenticate the overall effect, and you're done!

Colored pencil

Give photos a beautiful sketch effect without a pencil in sight!

Sketching from scratch can be daunting, especially to the Photoshop newcomer. So why not try out a few helpful filters to do the hard work for you?

Applying the Colored Pencil filter on its own will rarely give you the effect you're looking for, but with a few additional layers and a little know-how, you can craft an effective coloured sketch in next to no time.

This effect works particularly well on portraits and, for added impact, try placing a photo of a sketchpad underneath the subject.

Minimum filter, minimum effort

Make use of Blend modes

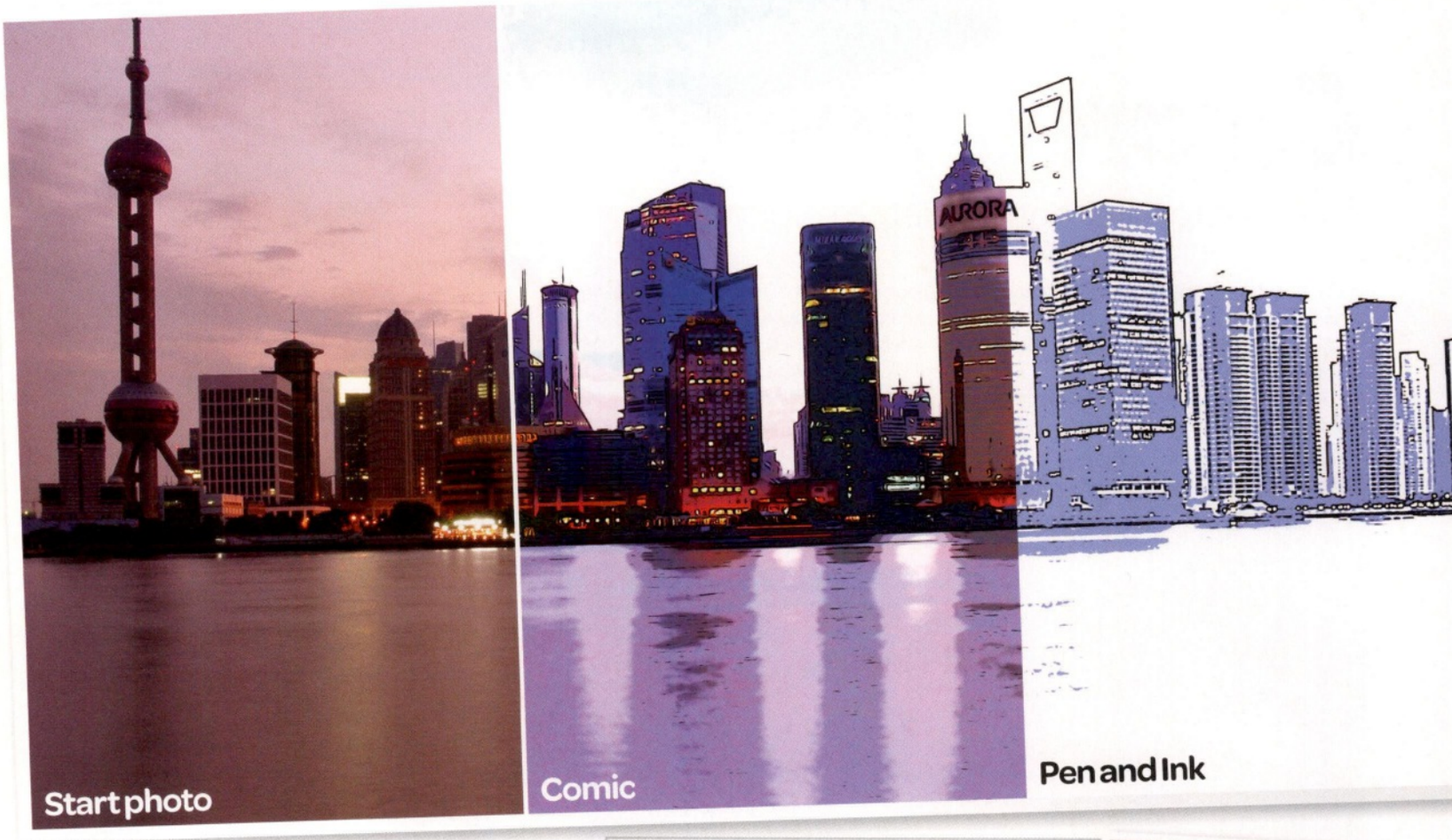
01 First off, open your start photo and Ctrl/right-click it in the Layer palette. Hit Duplicate Layer. Flick the new layer's blend mode to Color Dodge.

Invert your image

02 Make sure that the duplicated layer is highlighted (by default, this will be called Background copy) and choose Image>Adjustments>Invert.

Apply your filter

03 In the filter menu, choose Other>Minimum. A value of 1 or 2 should be sufficient to turn your photo into a beautiful real-media edit.



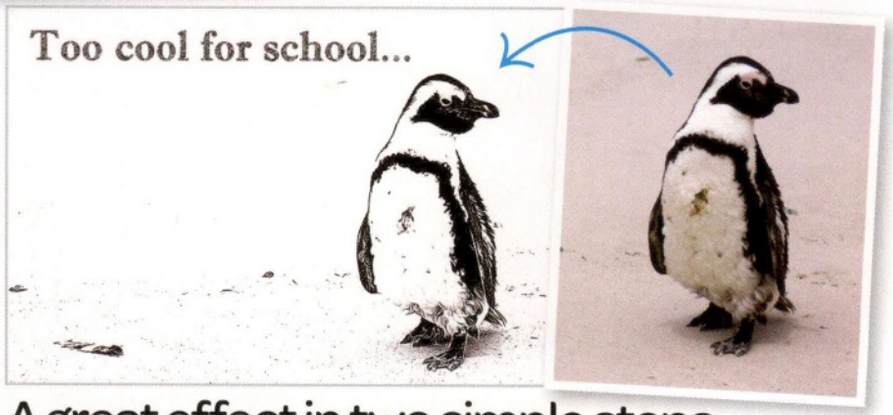
Simple sketches

Turn photos into sketches at the click of a button (or two)

Adobe introduced three new filters: Graphic Novel, Comic, and Pen and Ink in its version 11 of Photoshop Elements. Comic adds a pleasingly colourful treatment to images where the detail is still intact, while Pen and Ink strips the main colouring away, making room instead for a crisp white background, fine pen lines and simple shading. Both these effects are very simply applied and give you the results shown in the main image above.

The way in which the Elements interface has been massively adapted makes it incredibly quick and easy to try out too. Try out the filter on a monochromatic image to start with, like this penguin! The filter will pick up the strong contrasts between black and white beautifully and you'll end up with a strong effect.

Photoshop CS users should try out the Graphic Pen filter for a reliable sketch effect, or Conté Crayon for a beautifully shaded version.



A great effect in two simple steps

Try the sketch effect on high-contrast images for vivid results

Choose the filter

01 Choosing a high-contrast image like this penguin is a great starting point for this effect. In Elements 11, open your image and hit Filter>Sketch> Graphic Novel.

Vary the values

02 As always, the settings depend on the image itself. For this we set the Darkness to 3.67 to emphasise the black feathers, Clean Look to 0.27, Contrast to 1.41 and Thickness to 1.5.

Paint effects

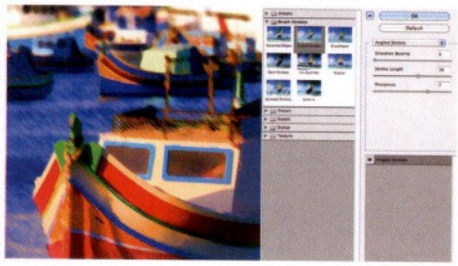
Layering different filters can lead to beautifully artistic outcomes

As with any Photoshop function, the final results rely heavily on your specific image; the colours and lighting in every photo are affected differently. You could even apply each on a different layer so you're able to quickly see what the effect looks like without some of them as you build up your composition (just click the eye icon off and on). Reduce the Opacity of layers so you can see if the treatments look better less vivid and don't forget to use blend modes, as the impact they have when used together with filters can create some very interesting results.

Blur filters

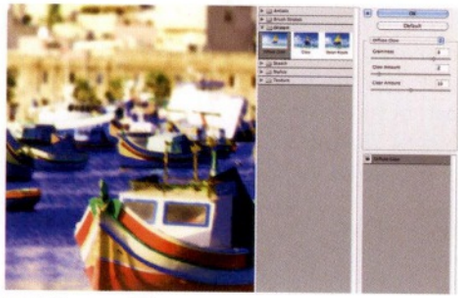
Using blur in paintings

The Blur filters are really good at softening areas or smudging things together. Like you might in a real-media painting, think of smudging the edges of colour together with your thumb. The Gaussian Blur filter is perfect for this kind of effect because of its low-frequency detail and beautifully subtle blurring.



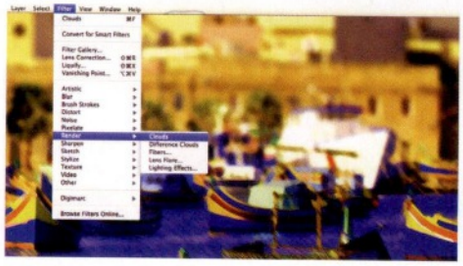
Angled Strokes

01 Kick off proceedings with your first filter. Choose Filter>Brush Strokes>Angled Strokes and apply the following values: Direction Balance 0; Stroke Length 30; Sharpness 7.



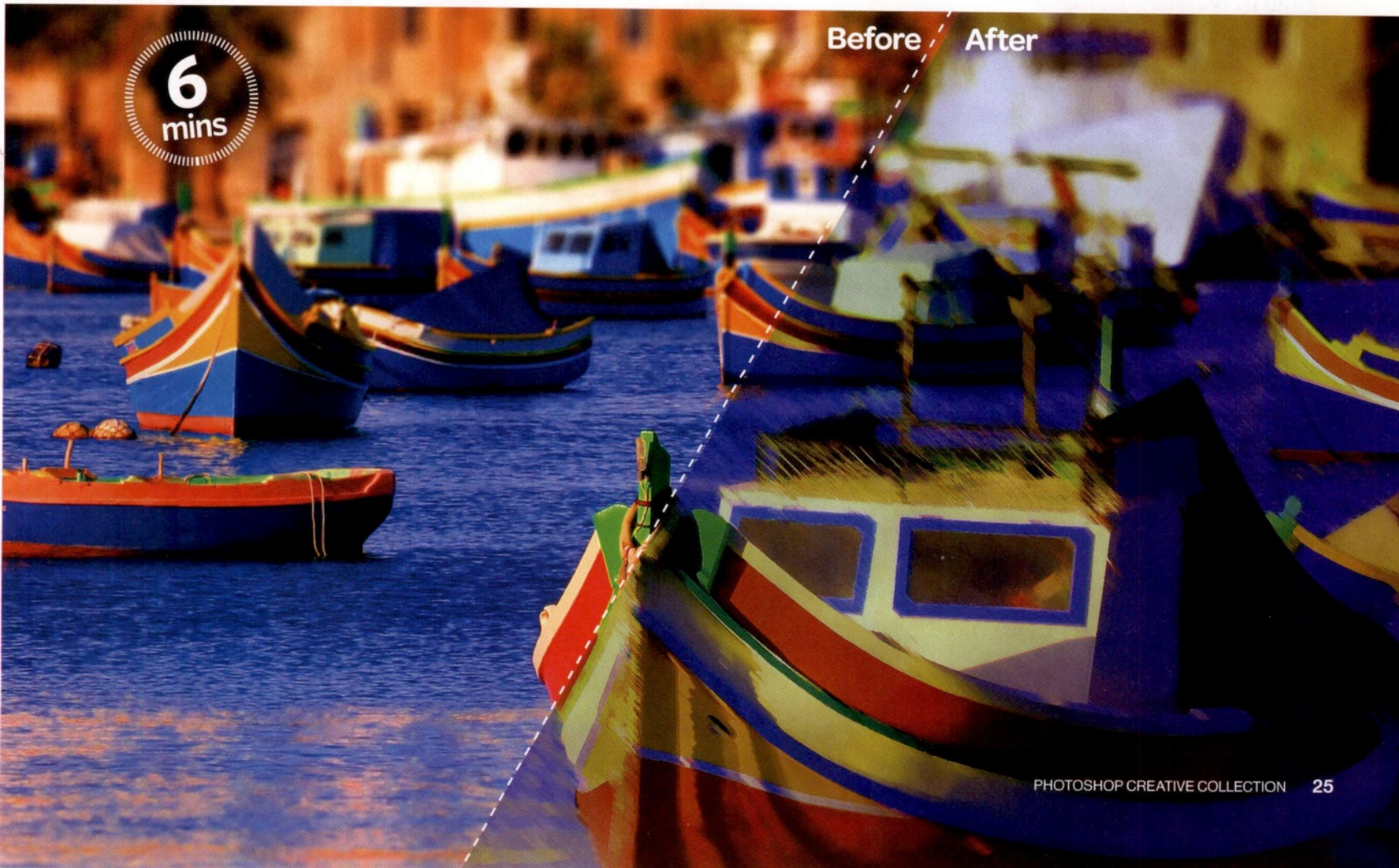
Diffuse Glow

02 Your second filter will be Diffuse Glow. Choose a Graininess of 8, Glow Amount of 2 and Clear Amount of 10. Hit OK and duplicate this layer.



Cloudy bay

03 Change your Foreground Color to dark blue and Background Color to pale blue. Hit Filter>Render> Cloud and change the blend mode to Multiply with 35% Opacity.



Comic styling

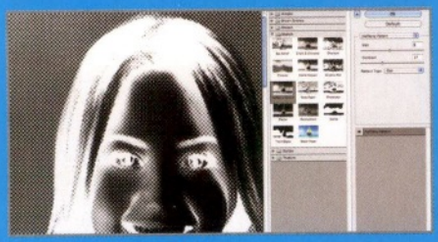
Add a halftone effect to your portraits for an instant shot of comic-book style

Adding a Halftone filter to your imagery creates a retro effect perfect for speech bubbles, storyboards and an overall comic look. Ensure you have the right start photo; clear outlines and good contrast are necessary for the overall effect. You can adjust the dot size in the filter too, so research into what I ook you're actually going for. It might be that you apply the filter, with large dots, to one part of your image, and with smaller dots to others. You could even create a halftone black and white background and have the main image in colour. Whatever you feel like, the key is to experiment!

"Ensure you have the right start photo; clear outlines and good contrast are necessary for the overall effect"

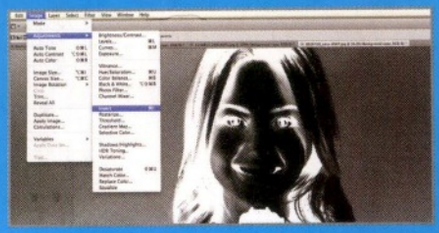
Start things off

01 Duplicate your photo layer and boost the contrast so the filter will have more of a vivid effect. Do this with an Adjustment Layer then head on up to Filter>Sketch>Halftone.



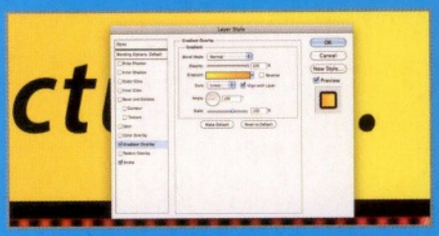
Apply the filter

02 When the Filter Gallery loads, zoom out (Cmd/Ctrl and -) to see the whole face and set the Size to 6 and the Contrast to 17. Ensure the Pattern Type is Dot and click OK.



Invert and Linear Burn

03 Now invert your image by heading to Image>Adjustments> Invert (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and switch the blend mode to Linear Burn. Your image should now be fully half-toned!



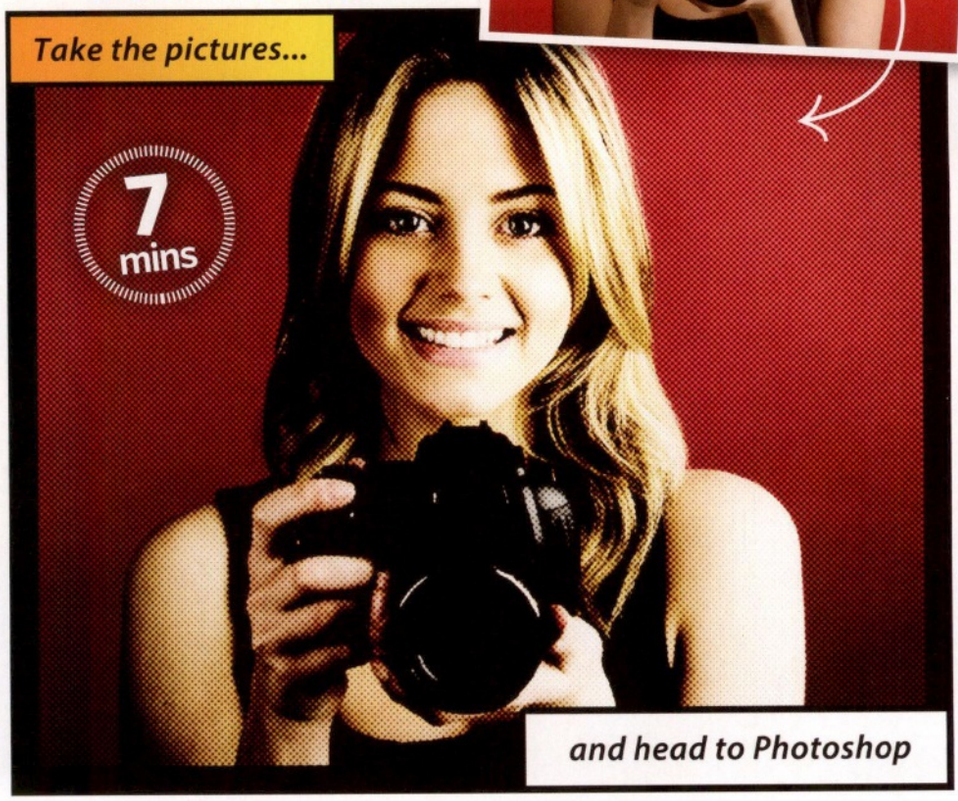
Add text

04 Draw a rectangle with Rectangle tool (U) and double-click it in the Layers Palette. Apply a Gradient Overlay from orange to yellow and type using the Type tool (T).

Custom fonts

Download the perfect font

Comic book fonts are widely available across the internet. Some of them are free for personal use too! Websites like **www.deviantart.com** have a great range for you to use. Incorporate them into your artwork, using the Transform tool (T) to skew them slightly so that they sprawl across your page in true comic-book fashion!



Favourite effects

There are over 100 different filters in Photoshop, each sectioned into groups. From Artistic filters, where you can achieve pastel or pencil effects to Distort filters, where the filter geometrically distorts an image. Here's a great selection of our favourite filter effects to give you some artistic inspiration.

FILTERS AT A GLANCE

Artistic

Colored Pencil

Dry Brush

Poster Edges

Rough Pastels

Smudge Stick

Brush strokes

Angled Stroke

Ink Outlines

Spatter

Sprayed strokes

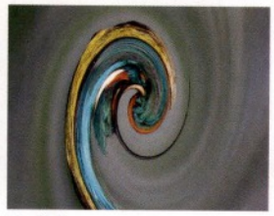
Sumi-e

Distort

Diffuse Glow

Glass

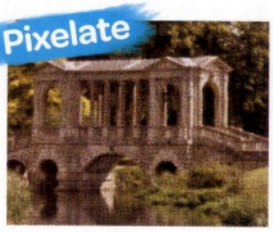
Spherize



Twirl

ZigZag

Pixelate



Color Halftone

Crystallize

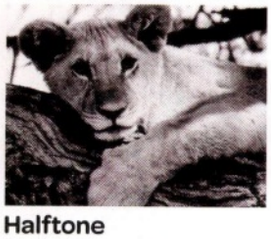
Mezzotint

Mosaic

Pointillize

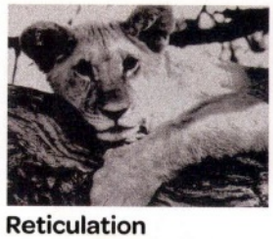
Sketch

Charcoal



Halftone

Photocopy



Reticulation

Stamp

Texture

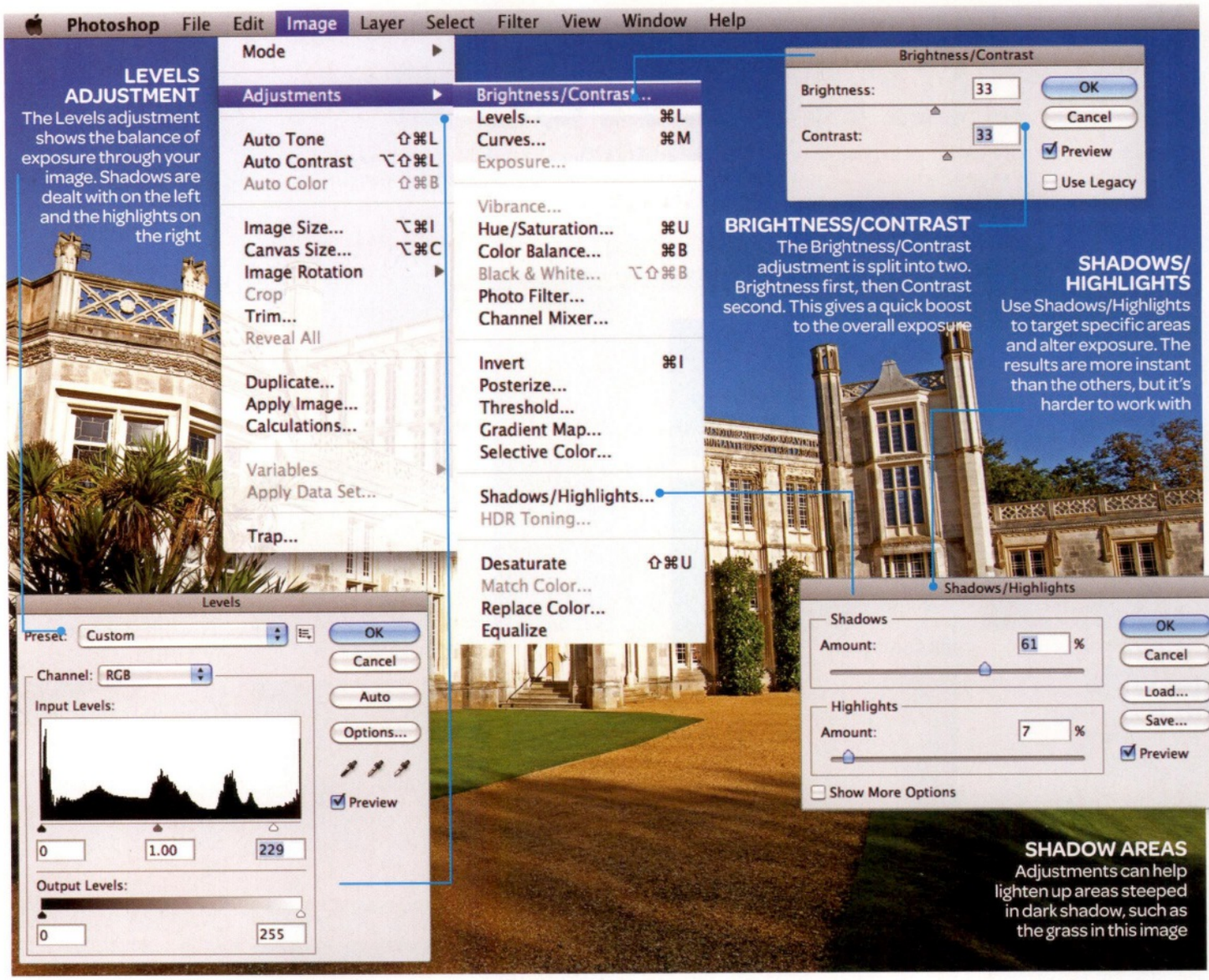
Craquelure

Grain

Mosaic tiles

Stain glass

Texturizer



Essentials

What you'll learn

Tweak brightness and contrast easily
Cleverly combine Levels and masks
Use the Shadows/ Highlights adjustment

Time taken

30 minutes

Improve your exposure

Adjustments and masks can produce stunning changes

Exposure is not an easy thing to get right, and even with your camera set to autopilot it can still produce mixed results for the final image. The term exposure is a way of describing how much light has been captured. For an image to looks its best, correct exposure is key and there are a number of ways to ensure this and create a better balance of lighting throughout compositions.

Problems can quickly arise when images have either too much light (overexposed) or too little light (underexposed). Images that have both can prove difficult to turn into a normal-looking shot.

The techniques we take you through range from using a basic adjustment, such as the Brightness/ Contrast, to a more difficult method using multiple masks. We suggest giving all three a try to find out which one has the desired effect. Whether you want to make the subject brighter or lighten up a landscape, we're sure there's a technique here that will put your exposure right.

PHOTOSHOP CS3 AND ABOVE & ELEMENTS 6 AND ABOVE | **WORKS WITH**

Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
ADJUSTMENTS
Brightness/Contrast
Brightness: 31
Contrast: 32
Use Legacy
BRIGHTNESS
The Brightness slider determines how much light is added into the image
CONTRAST
The Contrast slider changes the intensity of the light that's in the image
SHADOWS
The Contrast slider will darken shadows. Look for the darkest part of your image and decide on how much detail needs to be there
HIGHLIGHTS
Look to bring the highlights in your image to a bright white, but not bleached out

Get off the ground

Start with the Brightness/Contrast adjustment

Your first port of call for improving exposure should be the Brightness/Contrast adjustment. Using only two sliders, the adjustment provides the essential edits for altering the strength of light and contrast of highlights and shadows. It's the easiest adjustment out of them all, and results can be seen very quickly.

Bring life back into images

Brightness and contrast improved in no time

Load adjustment

01 Find the Brightness/Contrast adjustment from inside the Image menu under Adjustments. Usually, if an image needs brightening up then it needs an increase in contrast too.

Adjust brightness

02 The first thing to do is boost the Brightness slider. This affects the entire image in terms of exposure. Take this slider up to a point where the highlights start to lose detail, but not entirely.

Boost contrast

03 With the Brightness set, you're now ready to increase the Contrast slider. Start by moving this to the same value. This gives an even balance, but it won't do it any harm pushing it up for more impact.

Improve exposure with Levels and masks

The Levels adjustment is ideal for balancing lighting in your image

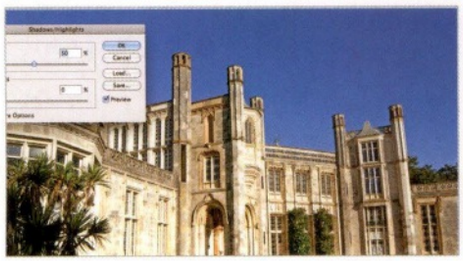
There is absolutely nothing stopping you from using two or more adjustments in one image to alter lighting. In this portrait, the background was considerably lighter than the person in the foreground, so its exposure needed to be balanced. By using a mask we were able to darken the background and lighten the person in separate stages.

Masks and more

Have extra control over exposure

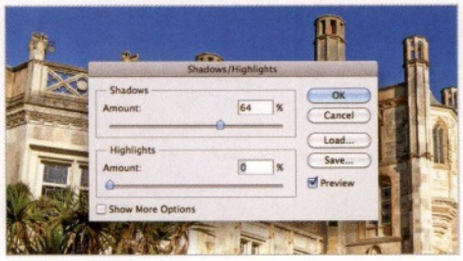
The Quick Selection tool

01 The Quick Selection tool is available in Photoshop CS3 and above, and Elements 6 and above. Select the tool and tick Auto-Enhance in the Options bar. Diameter can be set to 50px to begin with.



Select the person

02 Draw over the main person or object in your image to form a selected area. The tool will find the edges of your subject and wherever you draw with the tool. Lower the Diameter value for smaller parts.



Load Levels

03 From inside the Layers palette, open up the adjustment options (the fourth icon along the bottom). Click the Levels adjustment and you should see the selection added to the adjustment mask.

Adjust Levels

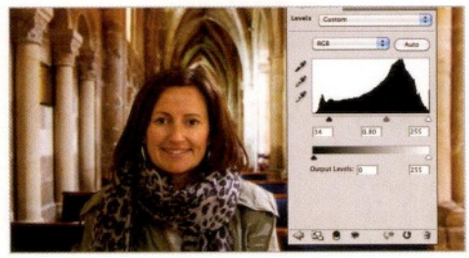
04 The subject should be singled out and the Levels adjustment can be edited. Move the far-right marker under the graph central to brighten the subject. Move the middle of the three to boost brightness.

Load and flip selection

05 To reload the selection around the main subject, Cmd/Ctrl-click on the layer mask of the Levels adjustment. Go to Select>Inverse to flip the area over to the background, ready for the next adjustment.

Levels number two

06 With the background now highlighted as a selection, add another Levels adjustment. You'll see a new adjustment layer with a mask but this time the white areas are black and vice versa.



Darken background

07 Darken or lighten the background parts of your image using the Levels adjustment layer. If it needs darkening, slide the far-left marker over to the right, and the middle marker to the right too.

Shadows/Highlights
Shadows
Amount: 64 %
Highlights
Amount: 0 %
OK
Cancel
Load...
Save...
Preview
Show More Options
SHADOWS
This area controls the shadows
LOAD/SAVE
You can save out changes made to the Shadows/Highlights adjustment to use again quickly on similar images that need correcting
MORE OPTIONS
Tick the Show More Options box to open up further controls for correcting exposure in highlights and shadows, such as Tonal Width and Clipping
CONTROL SHADOWS
Because there are lots of shadows across the building as well as on the ground, this adjustment affects all these areas in one go

Recover underexposure

Rescue dull photographs

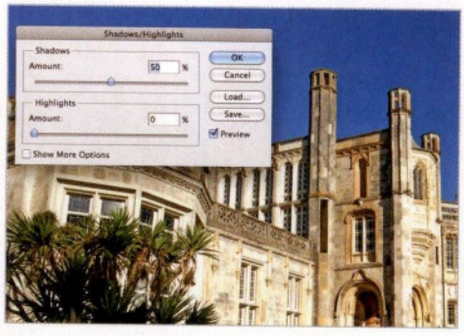
The Shadows/Highlights adjustment is another one of Photoshop's exposure-correction features, designed to retrieve lost details in under and overexposed parts of an image. The adjustment works instantly to adjust both the brightest and darkest areas. This one's a bit easier than the previous method, but it's worth trying out both to see which works best.

Better lighting

Dealing with difficult exposure

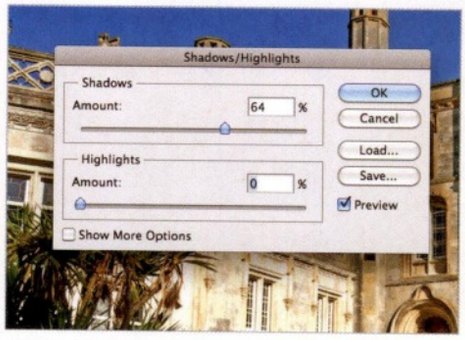
Locate the adjustment

01 Photoshop CS users need to go to the Image menu then to Adjustments and you'll see the option in there, just above Variations. Elements users need to visit Enhance>Adjust Lighting> Shadows/Highlights.



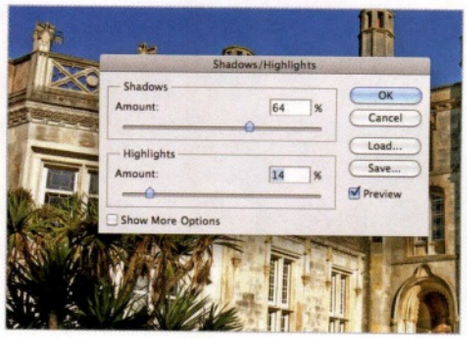
Instant effect

02 The adjustment goes to work straightaway on your image by giving a default effect. Shadows is automatically set to 50% and Highlights is at 0%. Assess the effect of this on your shot.



Readjust shadows

03 Depending on how dark your shadows are, boost the Shadows Amount slider up gradually to bring back details. With Preview ticked you can see how the changes will affect your image.



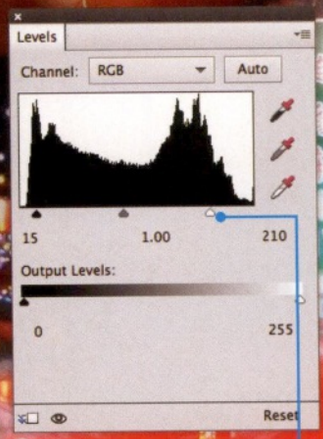
Highlight control

04 If the highlight areas look too bright as a result of the changes, slide the Highlights Amount up to lower the exposure and balance things out. This is usually necessary to get the perfect look.

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 11
This is how the Layers panel looks inside Photoshop Elements 11. Commands for adding new layers, masks and adjustments are featured at the top

LAYERS
Layers contain various effects that are stacked up, the order of which can be altered by dragging them up or down the panel

EXTRA STYLE
To add distortion to the effect, the highlights were bleached out in this image using the Levels adjustment



LEVELS ADJUSTMENT
The Levels adjustment layer only affects the layers underneath it. Pull the points under its graph to the left and right to adjust the contrast in the highlight and shadow regions

What does it mean?

Layer masks – When a mask is applied to a layer, parts of the image can be hidden by using the Brush tool. Masks offer the best way to edit images without actually deleting any of the important pixels.

Create exposure effects

Add movement to subjects and double up on exposure with these techniques

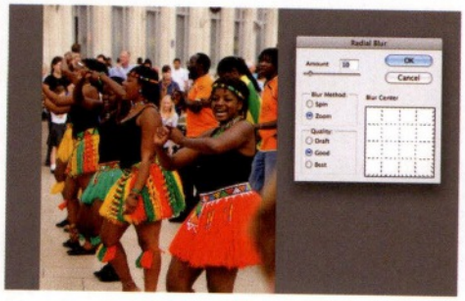
Some artists refer to Photoshop Elements 11 as a condensed Photoshop CS6. To an extent this is true, but this shouldn't lower your expectations of what can be done. For effects such as these that involve exposure, Photoshop Elements performs just as well as its big brother. Masking, blurring and adjustment layers are all included in Elements, and in an interface that's much friendlier for beginners.

Here, we show you three types of effects involving layering and blurring. The double-exposure effect creates a two-in-one image, whereby details from one are overlapped onto another and then faded out. Any images can be used to create this, and the results can be quite abstract.

Following this, we show you blurring techniques for adding movement and rotation to objects such as water and an umbrella. These are the sorts of effects that photographers capture by adapting their camera's settings, but, thankfully, Photoshop Elements lets us skip this difficult camera work and get straight to it!

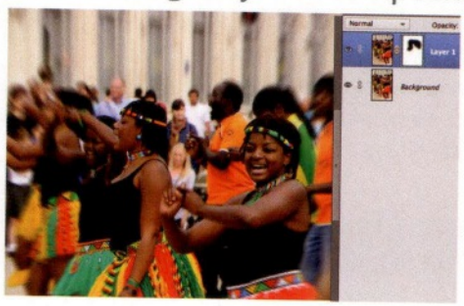
Create the double-exposure effect

How to use Photoshop Elements 11 for creating a layered composition



Radial Blur

01 Duplicate the Background layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J) straight after opening your image in Photoshop Elements. Head to the Filter menu and down to Blur>Radial Blur, and then set Method to Zoom and Amount to 10.

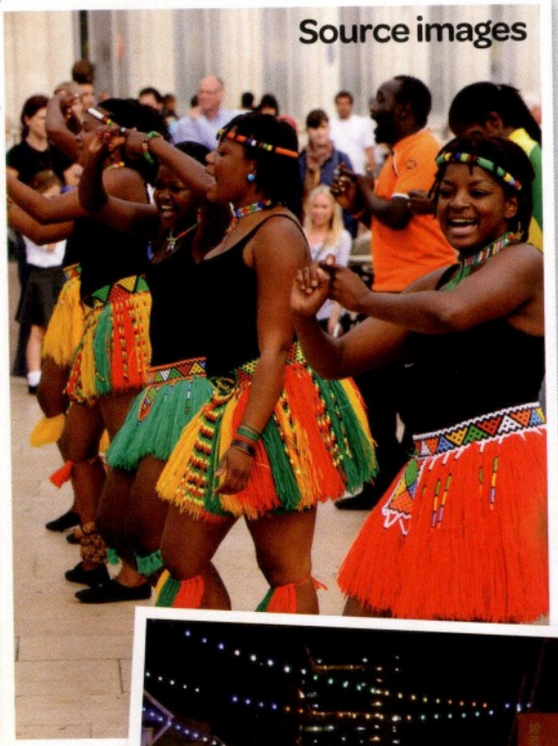


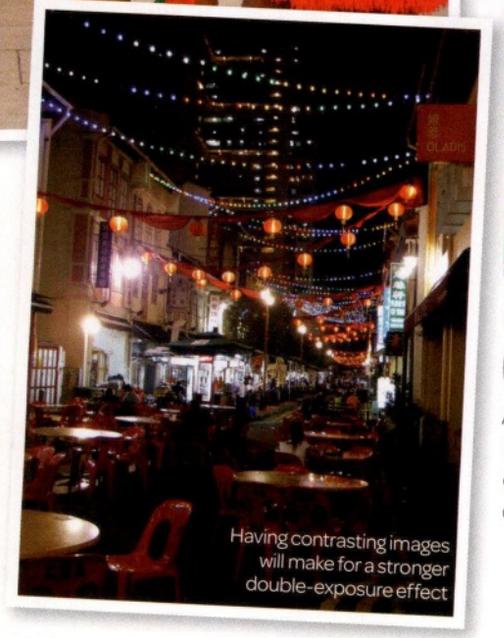
Layer mask

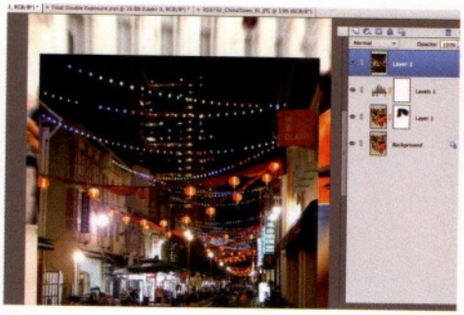
02 Add a mask by clicking the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers panel. Select the Brush tool (B) and set the brush size to 700px. Set your Foreground colour to black and paint over the faces and central parts to bring back the focus.

Boost contrast

03 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer and add the Levels adjustment. Increase contrast by sliding the black and white markers inwards. The adjustment layer comes with its own mask for customising with the Brush tool if needed.

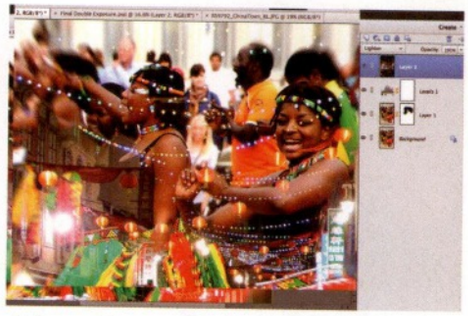






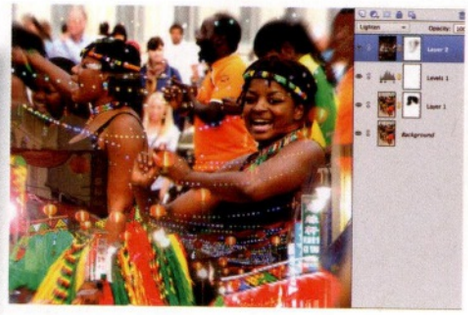
Double up

04 Load up your second image then head to Select>All and Edit>Copy. Turn to the first image by double-clicking its picture in the Photo Bin (Project Bin for Elements 10 and earlier) and head to Edit> Paste to insert the new image into the first.



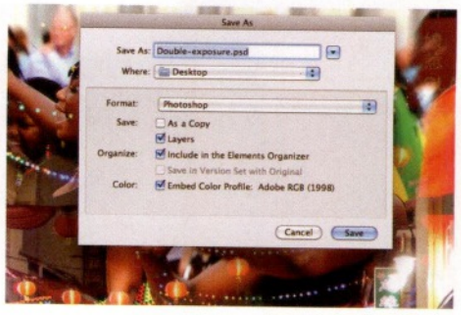
Blend layers

05 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to activate Free Transform. Use the corner boxes around the second image to resize it so it fits over the first. Change the blend mode of the second image's layer to Lighten from inside the Layers panel.



Customise effect

06 Details can be removed by adding a layer mask to this second image. As with the first image, use the Brush tool to hide areas of the second image that are covering up the subjects in the first. This will depend on the types of images you choose.



Save As

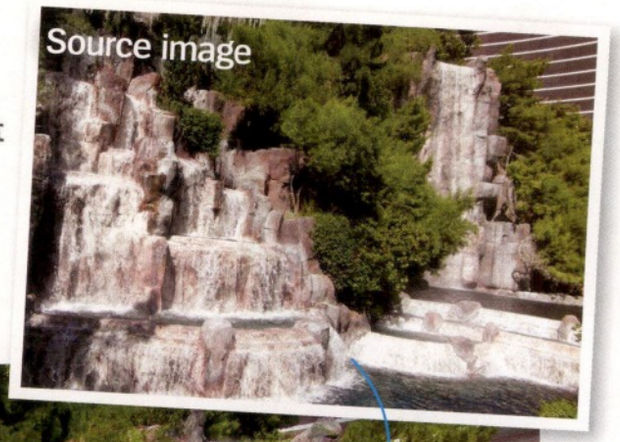
07 Since this is a multi-layered image, it needs to be stored as a PSD to retain the layers. Go to File>Save As and change Format to Photoshop. Enter a name and make sure Layers is ticked. Name the image and then hit Save to finish.

Fake movement in water

Expand your skills with the Blur filters for a long exposure effect

Long exposure effects are usually created using a camera set to a slow shutter speed. Using Photoshop, however, we can experiment with just how much blurring we need and also adjust where the blurring occurs in the image.

For water, we can select just that and then apply a level of blurring that suits. Follow the steps below to learn how the Motion Blur filter can be used in conjunction with the Magic Wand tool.



USING MASKS
After the filter was applied, a black layer mask was used to hide parts of the blurring. The Eraser tool was then used to selectively bring blurring back through in certain areas
MOTION BLUR FILTER
This filter blurs subjects in a given direction. Used with a selection of the water, we're able to add movement to otherwise static images
Motion Blur
OK
Cancel
Preview
Angle: -84
Distance: 100 pixels
MOTION BLURRING
The movement of the water can be captured using Photoshop's filters and masks. It's as if a long exposure was used at the time the photo was taken

Magic Wand tool

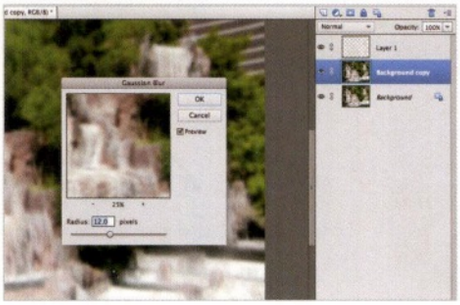
01 Open up an image with water and select the Magic Wand tool (W) from the Tools panel on the left side of Elements. Set Tolerance to 23; this figure will depend on the resolution of your image and may need increasing. Untick the Contiguous box.

Make selection

02 Click once on the water in your image to apply a new selection. With the selection active go to Layer> New>Layer via Copy (Cmd/Ctrl+J). This places all of the selected water onto a new layer ready for further editing.

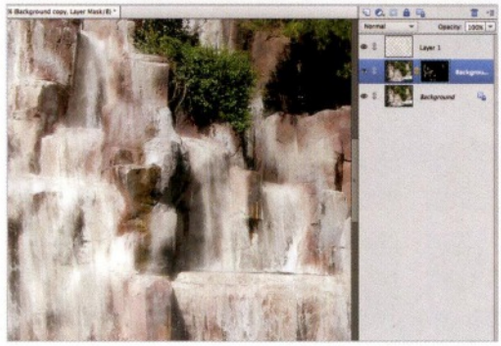
Motion Blur

03 Go to the Filter menu and then down to Blur>Motion Blur. Set the Distance slider to around 100px. Alter the Angle in the filter to match the direction of the water in your image. If it's falling straight down then a setting of 90 degrees will work.



Duplicate Background

04 Click on the Background layer in the panel on the right and hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to create a duplicate. Go back to the Blur filters and this time to the Gaussian Blur option. Set the Radius slider to 12 pixels and hit OK. The entire image will appear blurry, but this can be fixed with a layer mask.



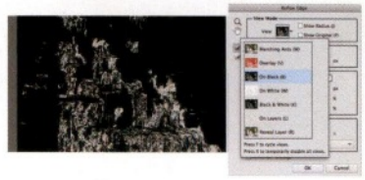
Add blur

05 Click on the Add Layer Mask button and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the white mask to black. The blurring should disappear. Select the Eraser tool (E), then set its colour to black, Size to 200px and Opacity to 50%. Paint over and around the water to soften.

Refine Edge

Preview the selection

The Magic Wand tool comes with the Refine Edge command, found with the tool's options. Click on this button and select a View mode such as On Black to see just how the selection looks and which areas have been included or excluded. Adjustments inside Refine Edge enable you to customise the selection and tweak it for a better Motion Blur effect.



Circular blur effects

Use this quick technique for spinning objects

This visual trick makes an object appear as if it's spinning around quickly in a circle. This uses the Radial Blur filter and some clever brushwork to make the object appear as though it's moving quickly, without affecting the person or the background areas.

This works best on round objects, such as umbrellas or wheels of some sort, as the filter uses a central point to rotate around.

SPIN BLUR
Movement was added to this umbrella by setting the Radial Blur filter to Spin
AFTER EFFECT
This is a creative way to transform a normal image with a blurring effect
HIDING LAYERS
Masks are crucial in this effect to hide the background and woman from the blurry umbrella

Duplicate and spin

01 Duplicate the Background. Now apply the Radial Blur filter to the image. Set the Amount slider to around 20 and the Method to Spin. Make sure the Blur Center box shows the blurring around the same location as your main subject.

Invert mask

02 Apply a layer mask to this duplicate layer from inside the Layers panel. Go to Filter>Adjustments>Invert to turn the white mask to black. This will turn off the blurring temporarily, and return your image to normal.

Eraser tool

03 Grab the Eraser (E) from the Tools panel and set it to a soft brush tip at around 400px. With your Foreground set to black, paint over the part you want blurry. Note how white areas appear on the mask, indicating changes being made.

Master monochrome

Pick up the basics of converting an image to monochrome using essential tools in Photoshop Elements

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

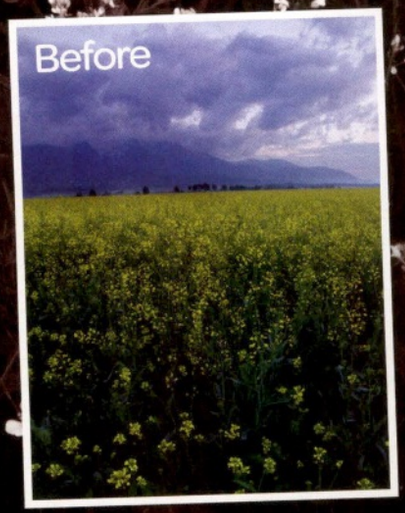
Essentials

What you'll learn

How to use the Convert to Black and White menu, along with layer masks, to adapt the perfect monochrome masterpiece with ease

Time taken

30 minutes

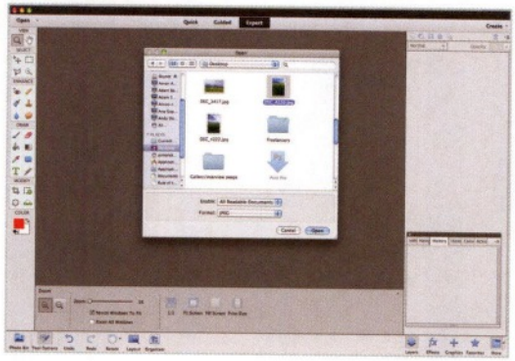


We simply can't settle on a method of monochrome conversion. Using Photoshop Elements, there are a number of ways to remove colour from an image, with some producing better results than others. But not everything in Elements is on the surface. It takes a bit of digging around to find the tool or adjustment that produces exactly the desired effect.

So we have gone on the hunt to find the best ways to convert a colour photograph into a monochrome masterpiece. The following tutorial focuses on how to use the Convert to Black and White adjustment, whereby you have multiple presets to play with that you can adapt around your specific image.

Then there's the Smart Brush tool; Photoshop Elements' answer to quick selective editing. The tool bases itself around selections, transforming your portrait images to draw attention to the people involved. And there's also the Effects panel, with its one-click tools to carry out the conversion process with colour tints.

So it really depends on the black and white style that you want to produce. For dramatic landscapes, use the Convert to Black and White method; for tinting with colour, head to the Effects panel; and for selective colouring, take hold of the Smart Brush tool.



Open image

01 Inside Photoshop Elements, go to File>Open (Cmd/Ctrl+O). Locate the image 'Landscape.jpg' from your free disc or find one of your own nature-based images to work on. Select it from the Open dialog. This image will show up in the centre of Photoshop Elements as a new Background layer.

Time for inspection

02 Take a closer look at the image by clicking a few times with the Zoom tool (Z), or by pressing Cmd/Ctrl and +. Assess the lighting, exposure and detail in the background and foreground objects. If you see areas that are too bright or too dark, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer and select Brightness/Contrast.

Expert tip

Simple conversion

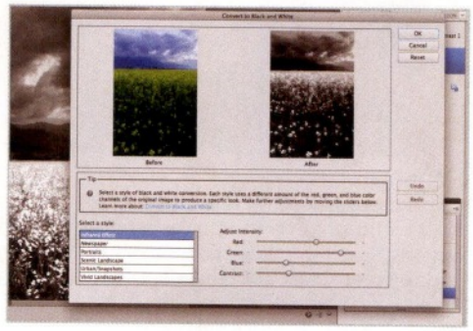
There's a method in Photoshop Elements that's instant for converting a colour image to monochrome. To use this method, go to the Enhance menu and down to Adjust Color>Remove Color. The shortcut for this is Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U. The actual conversion is only a basic one, and is used for simple monochrome effects. This can lack the punch that other methods produce, such as when using the Convert to Black and White feature.

Boost lighting

03 To boost the brightness of this landscape image, move the Brightness slider up to 15. Increase the Contrast slider to around 10. This should prepare the image better for monochrome conversion, and as an Adjustment layer these changes are permanent.

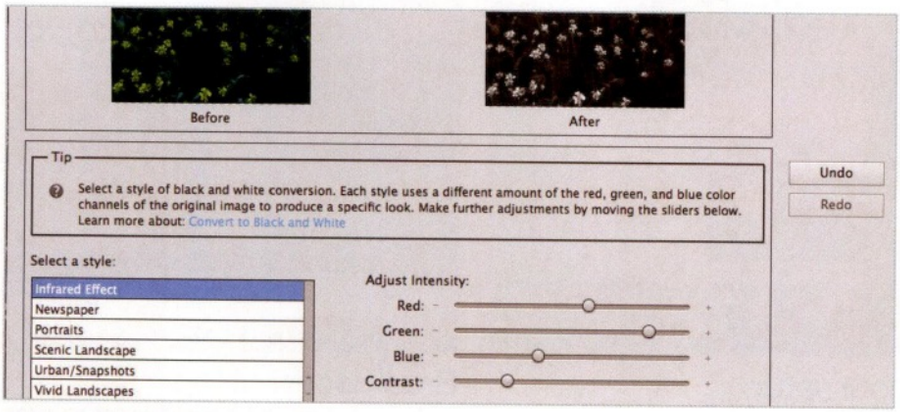
Make a copy

04 Click on the Background layer in the layer stack. To help work non-destructively in Photoshop Elements, go to the Layer menu at the top of the interface and down to Duplicate Layer. We'll be renaming this layer later on, so leave it as Background Copy for now. Hit OK.



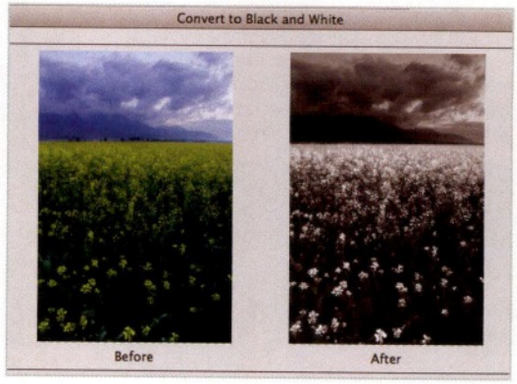
Infrared Style

05 Convert the image to monochrome by going to Enhance>Convert to Black and White. Inside this Adjustment's menu is a before and after of your image and a few Style presets. Select the Infrared Effect Style to boost highlights, shadows and midtones for an expressive greyscale image.



Control contrast

06 The Infrared Effect Style will blow out the highlights in the image, such as those in the field in our example image. To reduce the exposure in the highlight regions, gradually lower the Contrast slider in small amounts until you see the whites reduce in strength.



Better balance

07 Lowering the Contrast slider will flatten the whole image. To bring vibrancy back into the sky and mountains, boost the Blue slider ever so slightly. Small changes here go a long way. Finally, lower the Green and Red sliders. Hit OK.

Selective effects

Create instant monochrome effects in your portraits

Select tool

01 The Smart Brush tool (F) in Photoshop Elements is a quick-fire method for creating selective monochrome effects. Select this tool from the Toolbar and, in the tool's options, click on the picture thumbnail.

Presets galore

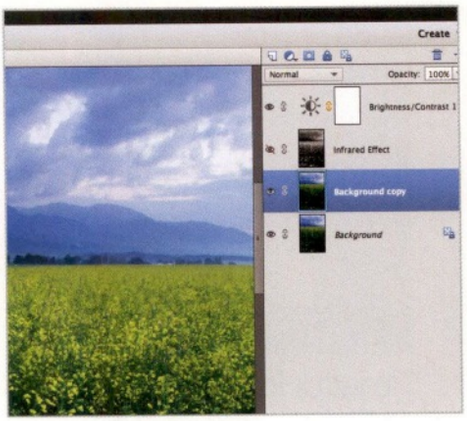
02 Categorise the Presets by Black and White for the monochrome options. Select the Green Lens Filter as a good effect to start with. There are other presets, such as Yellow Lens Filter, which can be easily swapped out at any stage.

In a click!

03 Set the Smart Brush's size so it's large enough to cover the subject you're converting to monochrome; for example, 500px. Then just click and drag over a part of your image to apply the effect selectively to certain subjects.

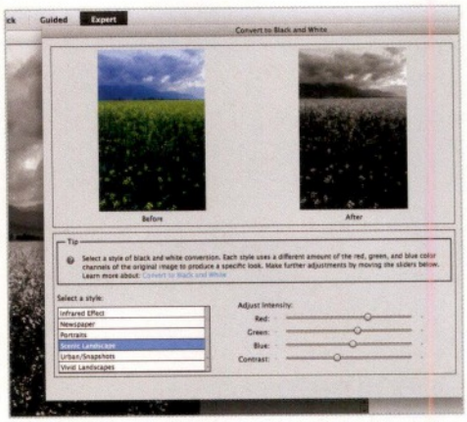
Adapt style

04 Hold Opt/Alt and click over areas that you want to keep in colour. Change the style of the monochrome effect by clicking on the different Black and White presets to see the contrast setting that looks best.



Stay organised

08 Double-click on the infrared layer to rename it 'Infrared Effect'. This helps to identify which monochrome setting was used. Click onto the original Background layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+J to make another duplicate of it. Click on the eye button next to the Infrared Effect layer to hide it.

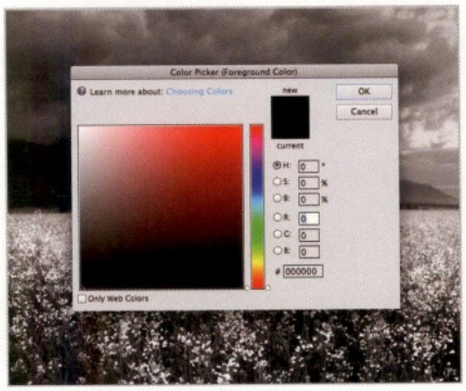


Scenic route

09 Now head back over to the Convert to Black and White adjustment under the Enhance menu, and this time click on the Scenic Landscape Style. For this effect, boost the Contrast slider up slightly and then hit OK to apply the effect. Rename this layer 'Scenic Landscape'.

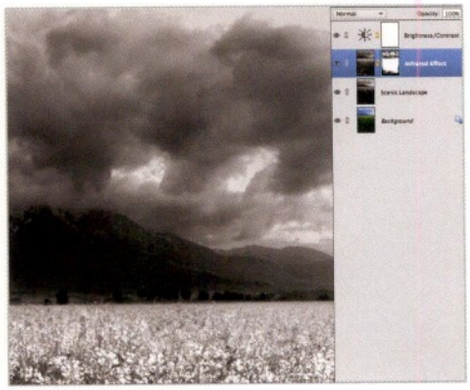
Reveal mask

10 Click on the Infrared Effect layer to select it. Now add a layer mask by heading over to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. You should see a white mask appear on this layer, highlighted blue to indicate that it's currently the active layer.



Colour setup

11 To edit your new layer mask, set your Foreground colour to black by clicking on the top swatch at the base of the Toolbar. Drag the colour selector to the bottom left corner and hit OK. A mask uses black and white paint to reveal or hide parts of its layer.

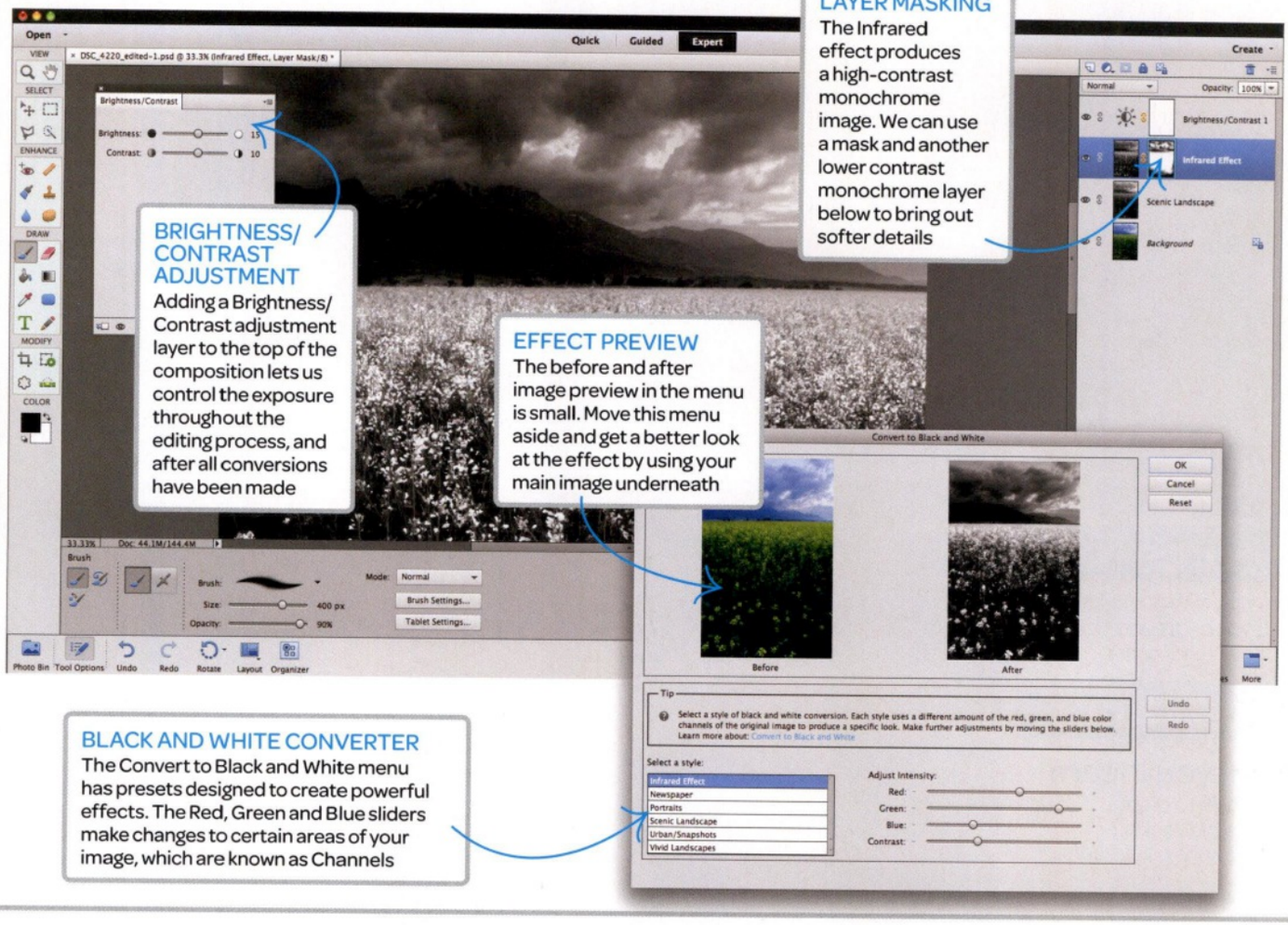


Brush work

12 Select the Brush tool (B) and change its Size to a soft 400px, with Opacity set to 90%. Paint over the clouds to reveal the contrast from the Scenic Landscape layer beneath. Brush over the highlights of the clouds to bring out the lighter areas.

Closer look Layers, masks, and adjustments

A closer look at what went into this effect


LAYER MASKING
The Infrared effect produces a high-contrast monochrome image. We can use a mask and another lower contrast monochrome layer below to bring out softer details
BRIGHTNESS/ CONTRAST ADJUSTMENT
Adding a Brightness/ Contrast adjustment layer to the top of the composition lets us control the exposure throughout the editing process, and after all conversions have been made
EFFECT PREVIEW
The before and after image preview in the menu is small. Move this menu aside and get a better look at the effect by using your main image underneath
BLACK AND WHITE CONVERTER
The Convert to Black and White menu has presets designed to create powerful effects. The Red, Green and Blue sliders make changes to certain areas of your image, which are known as Channels
Convert to Black and White
Before
After
Select a style:
Infrared Effect
Newspaper
Portraits
Scenic Landscape
Urban/Snapshots
Vivid Landscapes
Adjust Intensity:
Red:
Green:
Blue:
Contrast:
OK
Cancel
Reset
Undo
Redo

Tinted effects

Go for a duotone or tritone look instead

As with most effects, there's always more than one way to go about achieving it. Monochrome is no exception to this, and another way to experiment with different styles is to open up the Effects panel when in Expert mode. Click on the Effects tab (for version 11 only) and then filter the available options by Monotone Color. A number of monochrome effects will then open up, ranging from a standard black and white effect to colour based ones such as sepia, red and purple. These effects don't adjust the lighting in your image, though, so it's a good idea to use the Levels adjustment layer (found under the Layer menu) to boost the midtones if you find that they are lacking in contrast. Sometimes, an extra tone or two can add a nice edge.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Learn how to create custom old-looking photographs using filters

Time taken

1.5 hours

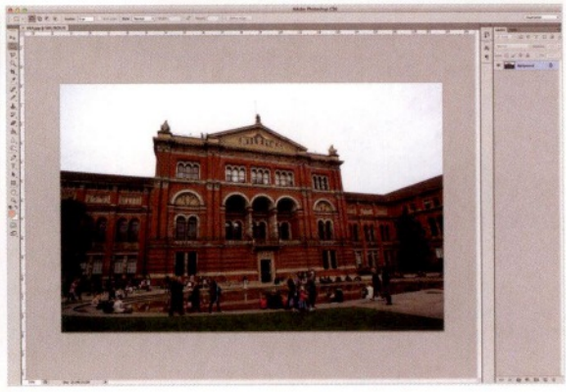
Add an old-school mezzotint

Give your modern snaps a customised old-style photo look

With the onset of digital photography, some of the heart and soul may be missing from the crystal clear, very representational images that are now prevalent in the world today. Sometimes it's nice to have photographs that have a little bit more heart and soul, ones that really have a homemade feel and vibe to them.

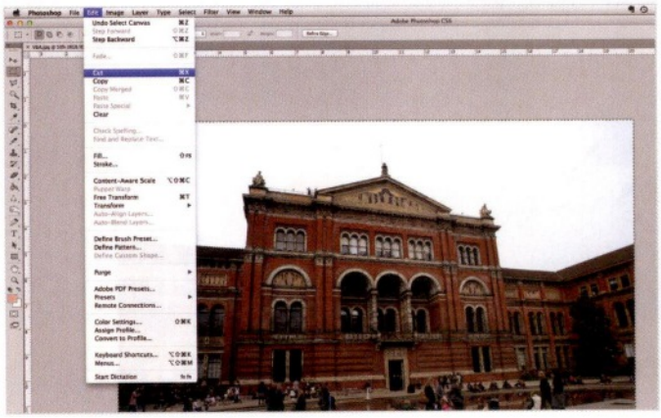
In this tutorial, you'll learn how to make your photo look like it's just been found in an old Victorian shoebox at the bottom of a dusty old chest; the look we're going for is a noisy, messy old vintage black and white photo. You can either try taking your start photo yourself for real personalisation, or use the one provided on your resource disc at the back of the bookazine.

Add an old-school mezzotint



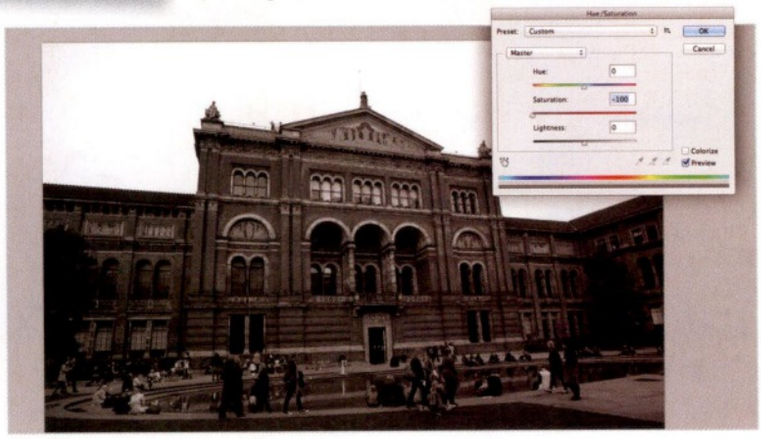
Say cheese!

01 First of all, you need to find a subject; quite often, the main thing that makes a vintage-look photo flawed is its modern subject. If in doubt, photograph a person; faces are always timeless.



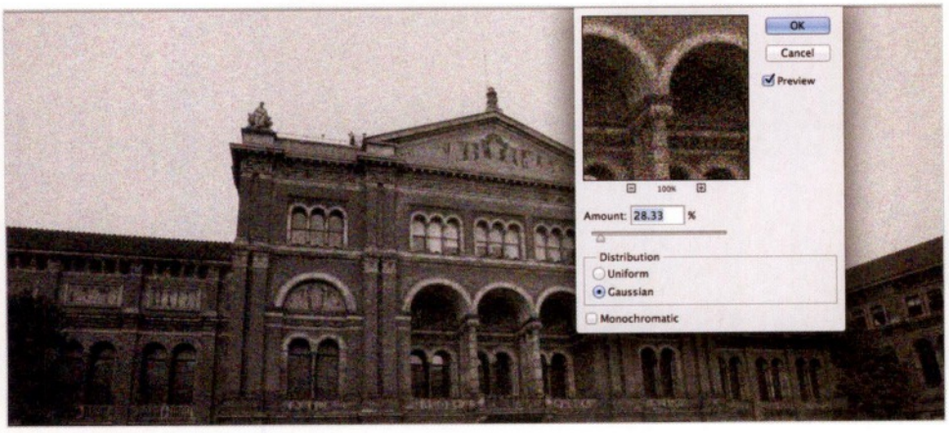
Prepare the photo

02 It's best to cut and paste the image to form a new layer in order to make it completely editable. To do this, you should first select the entire image (Cmd/Ctrl+A), then cut (Cmd/Ctrl+X) and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) to a new layer. You can also use the menu commands to do this (found under Edit).



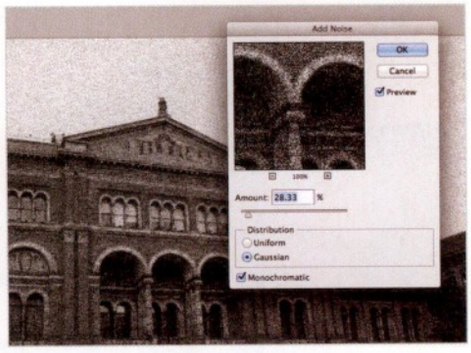
Refine the modern look

03 To make the original photo greyscale, go to Image>Adjustments> Hue/Saturation (Cmd/Ctrl+U) and then lower Saturation to -100. We do this instead of converting the file to greyscale because we may want to tinge the paper stock slightly to emphasise the ageing. As this step produces the basic image, copy it to the clipboard for later use.



Add the Noise

04 This is the most basic and most important filter used to create the static-filled old photo look. Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Be careful how much you add to the image; you want it to still be recognisable! For this layer, you can make it as noisy as you would like the most static-covered bits to be.

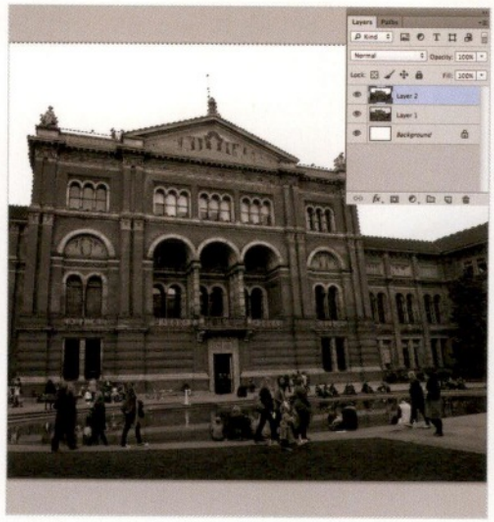


Monochromatic

05 In the Noise window, there are a couple of different types of Noise to choose from. You can experiment by selecting either Uniform or Gaussian to see which you prefer for your image. Make sure that you select the Monochromatic tick-box to avoid any unwanted colours.

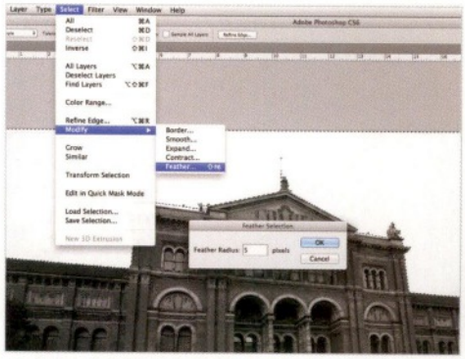
Work in layers

06 You may have an image which has detailed areas where you want there to be a little less noise; to control how the noise is spread, paste in the black and white image that you made in step 3 (which will automatically make a new layer).



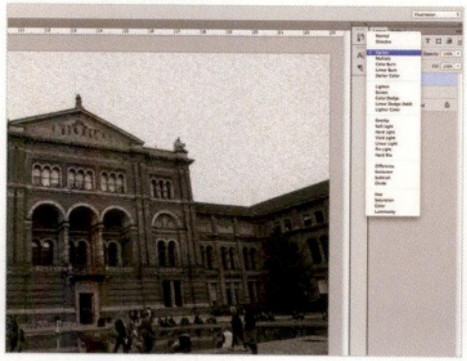
Control the Noise level

07 Within this new layer, you can delete areas which have already been finished by the work on the first layer, allowing them to show through. Use the Magic Wand tool (W) to select the sky; you can experiment with the Tolerance to get the right selection, and if you make a mistake then undo it (Cmd/Ctrl+Z or Edit>Undo).



Feather the edge

08 When you have a selection you're happy with, it's best to make sure the edge of the selection is Feathered enough to blend the layers together without a noticeably sharp edge. Go to Select>Modify>Feather (Shift+F6) and pick a small amount like 5px. Then hit Backspace/Delete to remove the selected part of the top layer.

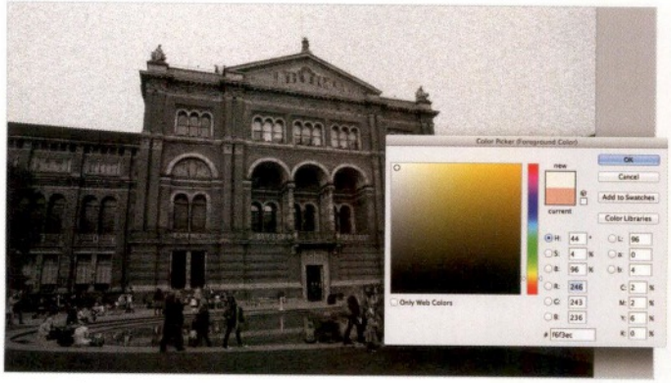


Blend mode

09 Deselect the shape (to make sure any further edits are applied to the whole layer) by going to Select>Deselect (Cmd/Ctrl+D). Then, with the top layer selected, choose a blend mode (drop-down box above the Layer palette) that works with the image. Difference combines the smooth greyscale image with the noisy one very well.

Adjust the Levels

10 The Levels tool is helpful for adjusting the boundaries of the shadows, midtones and highlights. While still in the top layer, go to Image>Adjustments>Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and experiment by moving the sliders. You can also adjust the Brightness and Contrast (Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast) to bring out the detail.



Tint the stock

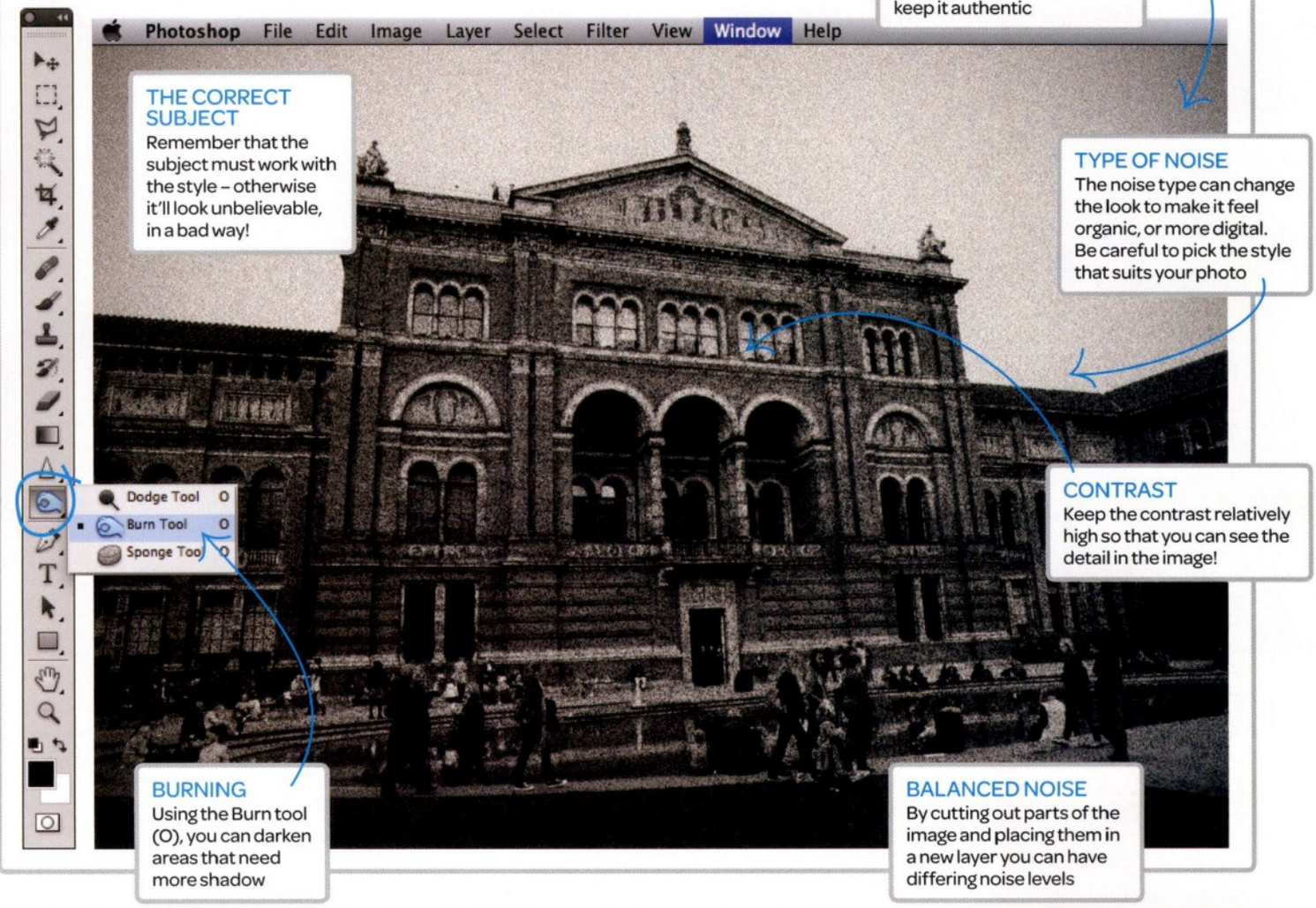
11 Paper stock will often tinge and tint over time. To add authenticity to your image, create a new layer (Layer>New>Layer or Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and fill it with a paper-like colour. You can then change the blend mode (here, we use Multiply) and the Opacity (in the Layers palette) of this layer to make sure that it is just a subtle influence on the image.

Vignette it

12 With older cameras there tends to be a darkening around the corners due to the lower quality of the film, or the photographic paper's sensitivity; you can replicate this effect very easily in Photoshop. First, create a new layer and fill it with black. Then, in the Brush window at the top, enlarge the Master Diameter of the Eraser tool (E) and soften the Hardness. Finally, use it to erase the centre of the black layer.

Mezzotint Have a closer look

A quick glance at the main techniques



SHADOWY EDGES
Dark edges, or 'vignetting', is common with old cameras – keep it authentic

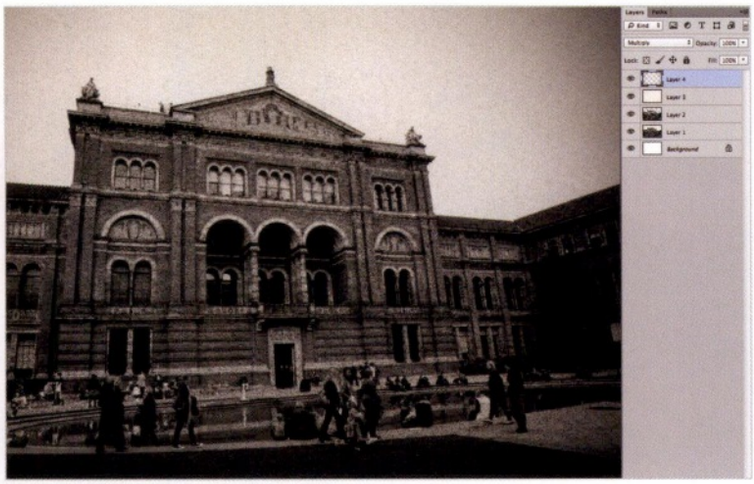
THE CORRECT SUBJECT
Remember that the subject must work with the style – otherwise it'll look unbelievable, in a bad way!

TYPE OF NOISE
The noise type can change the look to make it feel organic, or more digital. Be careful to pick the style that suits your photo

CONTRAST
Keep the contrast relatively high so that you can see the detail in the image!

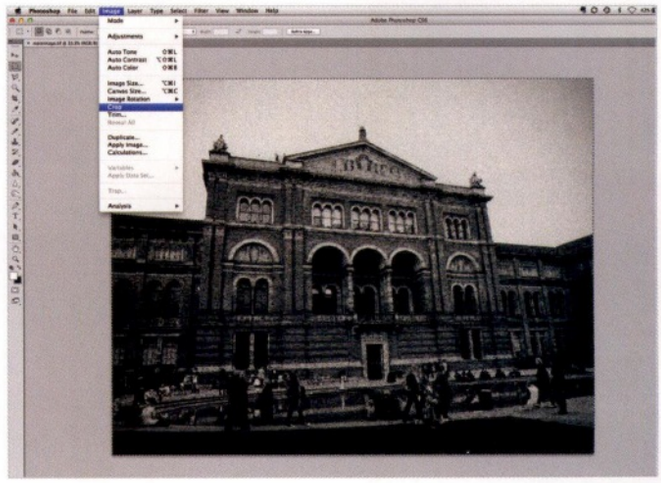
BURNING
Using the Burn tool (O), you can darken areas that need more shadow

BALANCED NOISE
By cutting out parts of the image and placing them in a new layer you can have differing noise levels



Multiply and Noise

13 Make sure that the blend mode of this black layer is also set to Multiply, and then apply some Noise to it as before to keep it cohesive. At this point, it's best to go through and adjust the Opacity of the layers and the Brightness/Contrast to ensure the image is balanced.



Frame it up

14 As a final note, it's always good to make sure that the framing is right once you've first opened up the photo in Photoshop; that way, you won't spend hours perfecting part of the image that you will end up cropping off at the end.

Before

Apply an HDR look to an image

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

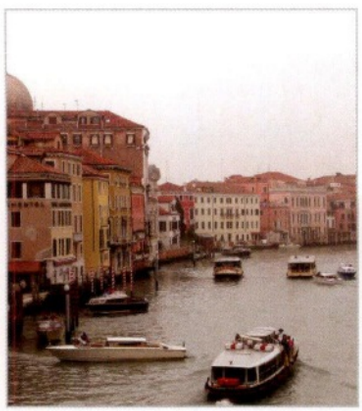
HDR Toning adjustment
Quick Selection tool
Color Balance adjustment

Time taken

20 minutes

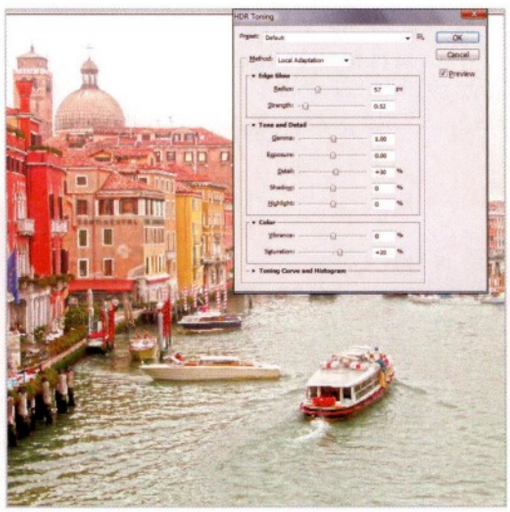
Learn how to light a single exposure creatively using the HDR Toning adjustment

The HDR look dropped jaws when it first hit the scene; a great way of getting every last drop of detail from a high-contrast scene by merging a number of exposures and making it all look truly amazing in the process. The hyperreal finish became so popular that many a photographer assembled a number of frames purely to get that look, even for lower contrast scenes where HDR wasn't actually needed. Adobe cottoned on to this and decided to build in a feature for CS5 to allow the simulated HDR look to be applied to single images, saving everyone the need to capture multiple frames for the sake of it. Step forward HDR Toning. It features a number of additional controls for colour and exposure, but really there are only three main sliders that you need to work to get your HDR effect and they are Detail, Radius and Strength. The strength and look of the overall effect will be determined by these three sliders and each image will most likely require varying amounts of each to get a similar effect, depending on the arrangement of tones and the amount of detail. We've gone very strong with our sample image just to show you what's possible, but if you find it all a little eye-watering, there's nothing to stop you applying a much more subtle finish to your own imagery. Just remember to save a copy of the original somewhere as HDR Toning has to be applied to the Background layer. You have been warned!



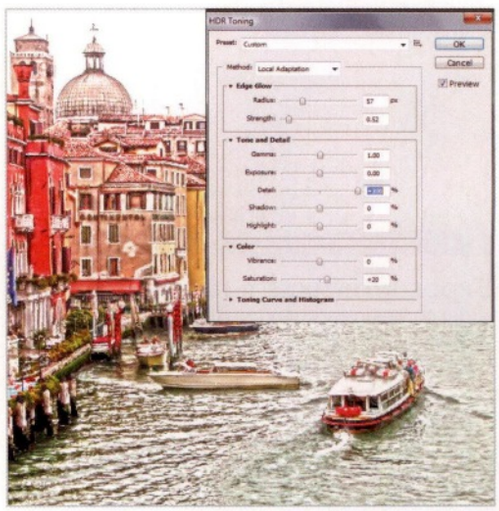
Open the start image

01 Open up your CD image entitled 'creativelighting_start.jpg'. Now we can begin to apply our creative lighting effect. We're going to use the HDR Toning command, which can be used to apply a HDR looking effect to 8-bit and 16-bit single exposures.



Start toning process

02 Go to Image>Adjustments>HDR toning. The HDR toning dialog appears and we're ready to start the process. The shadows have already been lifted with the default settings and the colour saturation improved.



Increase Detail settings

03 We want our effect to look stronger still and we want to improve the contrast as things look a little flat towards the back of the image. Our first step is to move the Detail slider to the max setting of +300%.

Key sliders & their effects

Detail effects The Detail slider is responsible for much of the HDR effect. At the maximum setting the effect looks very strong.

Strength effects High Detail settings mean small changes in the Strength slider go a long way. A slight reduction on the default is best practice.

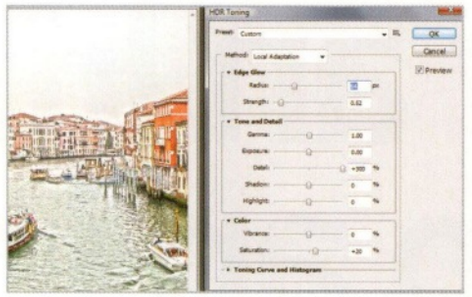
Radius effects
The Radius slider is less affected by the strength of the Detail slider but its settings still have a stong impact

Exposure effects The Exposure slider comes in very handy as it works in tandem with the HDR toning effect – much better than changing afterwards.

Colour effects Colour saturation is a vital part of the high dynamic range look so the Vibrance and Saturation controls are very helpful.

Radius and strength sliders

These control how the toning is applied

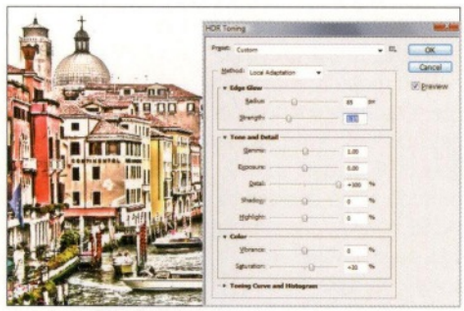


Burn it

04 The effect looks strong but things seem a little crunchy. We can experiment with the Radius slider to try and improve this. A left movement makes it crunchier still, while moving it right spreads the effect outwards from the edge detail.

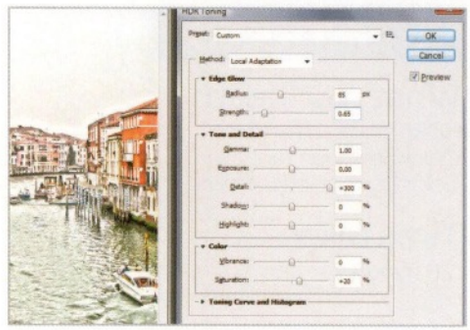
Clean up

05 If we go too far to the right we lose the creative effect, so it's a matter of playing and watching the image update before we hit a sweet spot. A setting of 85px seems to work well for this image.



Experiment with Strength

06 Next up is the Strength slider. This determines the strength of the contrast of edges rather than the width that Radius focuses on. Move it right to see how quickly the blacks become heavy and the highlights begin to burn out.



Find optimum Strength

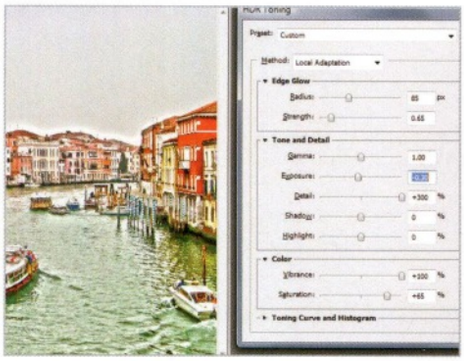
07 The default setting of 0.57 shows reasonable edge contrast already. Pull it left for a softer look. We want something hyperreal so we make a little increase of above the default to 0.65

Increase the colour

08 We want to introduce more colour in the image so we look to the Vibrance and Saturation sliders in the Color section of the dialog. We push Vibrance to +100% and Saturation to +65%.

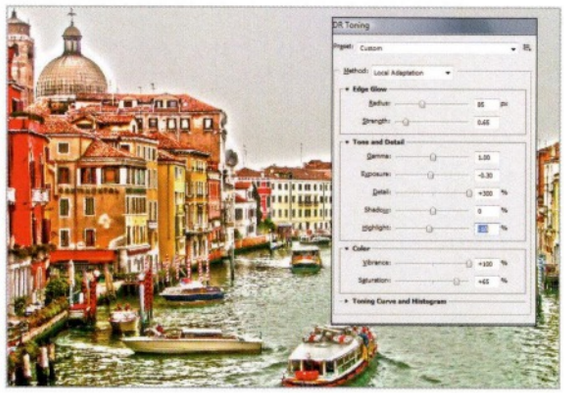
Some exposure and contrast work to finish

Plus we add a little colour to the sky



Low-level snow

09 The image looks a touch bright so we can darken it a fraction using the Exposure slider. We bring it down to -30. The highlights still look too bright, but darkening any further with the Exposure slider makes everything a bit murky.



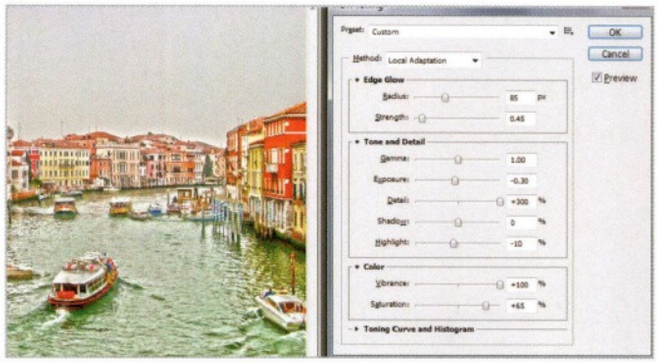
Knock back highlights

10 We can focus our changes on the highlights only using the Highlights slider. Knocking them down to just -10% makes them look a little more palatable. The shadows are fine so we don't need to touch that slider.

Expert tip

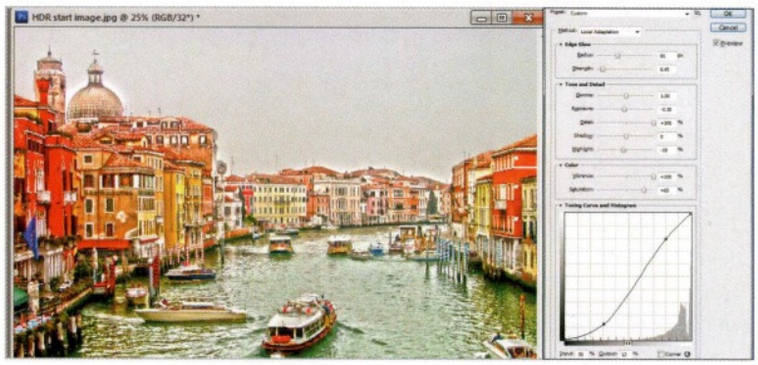
Edit the mask

The Quick Selection tool is very powerful, but not perfect by any means. Quite often there are areas close to the edges that are not exactly selected on close inspection. If you notice the blue of the Color Balance is missing in an area of the sky or present where it shouldn't be, press D to reset the palette to white and black, zoom in close, take the Brush tool B and use X to switch between white and black to brush the adjustment in and out with the layer mask still active.



Tweak the Strength

11 Our Exposure and Highlight changes have made the edge contrast look quite heavy, so we need to go back to the Strength slider to try and remedy the problem. We decide to pull it all the way back to 0.45; less than the default setting.



Strengthen the shadows

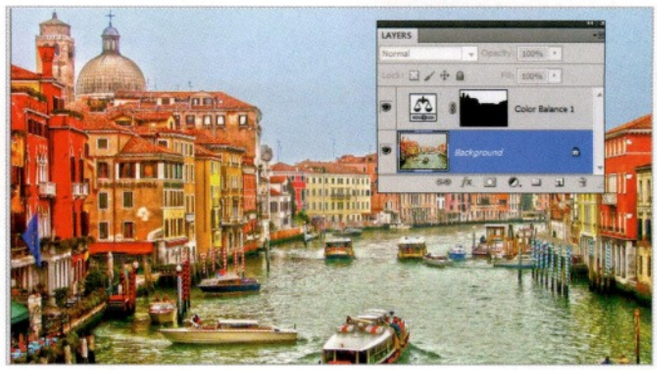
12 We can also improve contrast a little with the Toning Curve section. Click the triangle to expand it. The highlights are fine so we plot a point there to root them. We plot another in the shadows and drag this down to strengthen the dark tones.

Improve the sky

13 We're all done in the HDR Toning dialog now so we click OK to apply the settings. The only thing left to do is to improve the dull grey sky. We need to select it first, so press W for the Quick Selection tool or Shift+W if Magic Wand is active.

Select the sky

14 Click & drag inside the sky to select it. If you encroach into the rest of the scene at any point, hold down Alt/Opt to subtract from the selection and drag inside the offending area. If you miss any of the sky area, just click and drag inside of it without Alt/Opt.



Colour the sky

15 With the selection still active, add a Color Balance adjustment layer using the button at the base of the Layers palette. It will appear with a mask based on the selection. With Midtones active, set Cyan and Blue to their max settings.

Photo editing

Enhance a landscape

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use channels to select tree foliage and discover a secret compositing trick for eliminating halos

Time taken

2 hours

Adding realistic extra elements to a photograph so it looks like they were there all along is a useful technique to get right

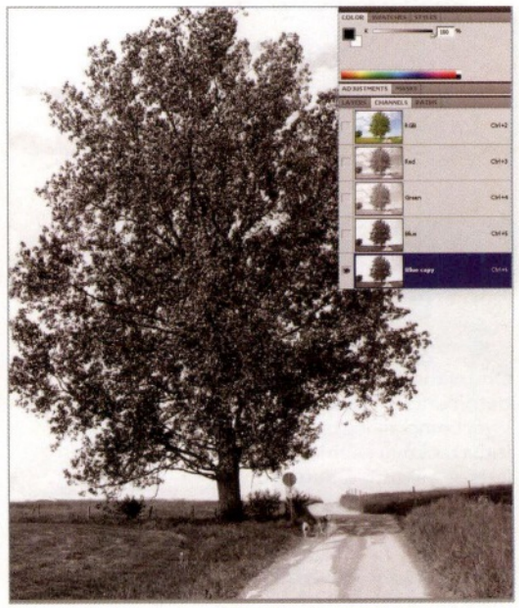
Okay, let's go ahead and say it: compositing is not easy. In fact, many times it can be hard or downright difficult or even seemingly impossible. It all depends on what images you are trying to put together, as certain elements tend to be easier to select than others. Elements that are notoriously difficult are the ones that lack a clear, hard edge. Things like flyaway hair or tree leaves are always a challenge because there's no easy edge to follow. Plus some of the area is semi-transparent, not ideal for the Lasso tool.

In this short tutorial you will learn a technique for using the image's colour channels to generate a perfect selection of foliage. We will also show you a compositing trick involving double layers, a blend mode and a rarely used filter that will do away with the annoying edge halos that are often a tell-tale sign of a composite.

This entire technique is of moderate difficulty, so we will take you through exactly how to do it on one tree first. You will then be equipped to perform the same technique for the other trees on the rest of the image.

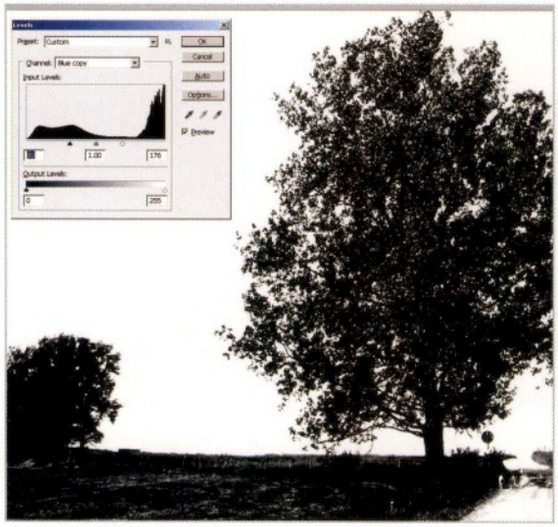
Obtain images

01 The first step is to find a landscape image you'd like to have trees added to, then to find images of said trees to add. Look for trees that are backed by sky, or use the ones we've provided.



Duplicate the blues

02 Choose one of the tree images to work with. Switch to the Channels palette and find the channel that contains the most contrast between tree and sky (usually Blue). Duplicate it by dragging it down to the New Channel icon.



Light and dark

03 Press Cmd/Ctrl+L to run a Levels adjustment on the duplicate channel. Increase the contrast dramatically by pulling the outside handles (small black and white triangles found below the histogram) towards the centre of the chart.

Burn and brush

04 Certain highlights of the image, like areas of the trunk, ended up being rendered white by the levels. These need to be fully black, so start with the Burn tool set to 50% to darken grey areas and then finish off stubborn parts with a solid black brush.

Create a selection

05 Now to see how all your work has paid off! Cmd/Ctrl-click the duplicate channel's thumbnail to create a selection from it and then click back on the RGB composite channel's thumbnail to return to the regular image view.

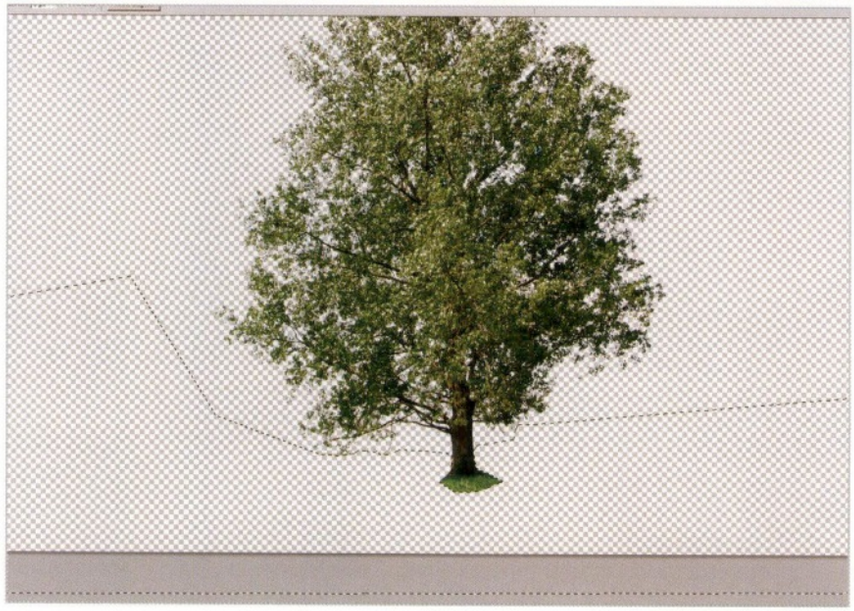
Behind the mask

06 Return to the Layers palette and double-click on the Background layer to give it a name and transform it into a regular layer. Now Opt/Alt-click the New Layer Mask icon at the foot of palette. This will now use the inverse of the selection to create a mask for the layer.

Expert tip

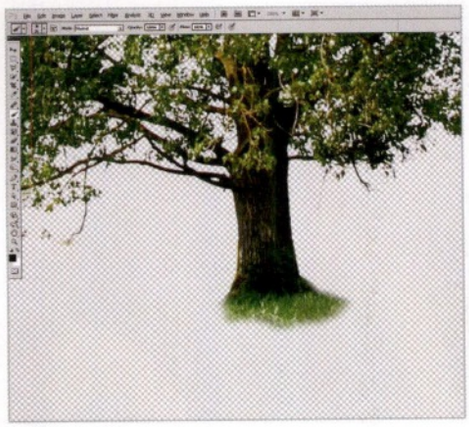
Use mask groups

One of the apparent detriments of the double layer compositing technique is the fact that each layer is using a slightly different mask, so if changes need to be made to one mask, it can be difficult to perform the exact change to the second mask accordingly. A good solution for this problem is to place both layers (and any accompanying adjustment layers) into a group. That leaves you to apply a mask at the group level instead and affect all of the layers in exactly the same way.



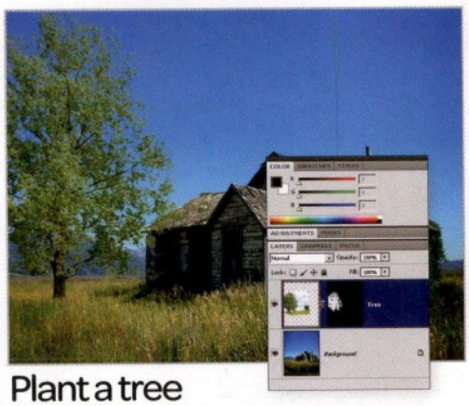
Ground removal

07 Be sure the mask is still targeted and use the Polygonal Lasso tool to select the ground and background area. Leave a small section at the bottom of the tree. Fill this selection with black then press Cmd/Ctrl+D to cancel the selection.



Hide the roots

08 Use a soft-edged black brush on the mask to gently fade the ground at the base of the tree. Inspect the rest of the image to search for errant pixels that also need to be masked out.

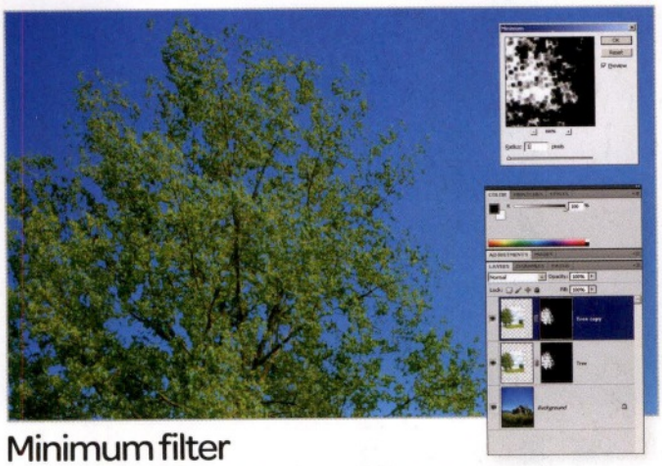


Plant a tree

09 Drag and drop the tree layer onto the landscape. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to bring up the Transform tool handles. Move and scale the tree into position, paying close attention to relative size and the light direction in the rest of the piece. Click the checkmark to commit the transformation.

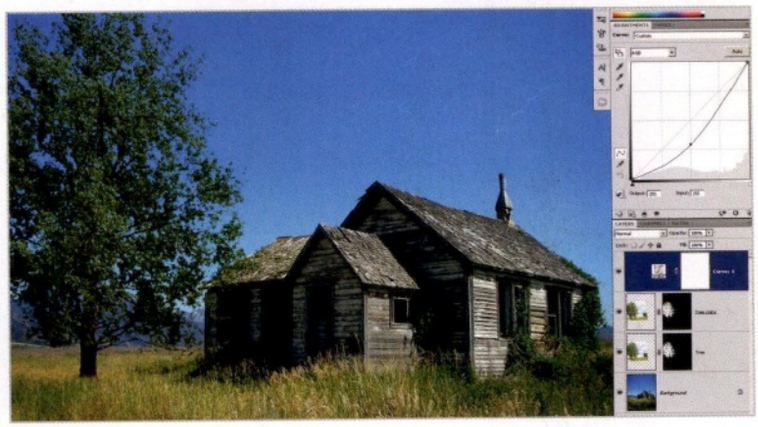
Banish halos

10 At this point there may be a noticeable halo or fringe around the tree leaves, so here's a clever compositing trick to fix that. First, duplicate the tree layer with Cmd/Ctrl+J. On the bottom copy, set the blend mode to Multiply and reduce the Opacity to around 60%.



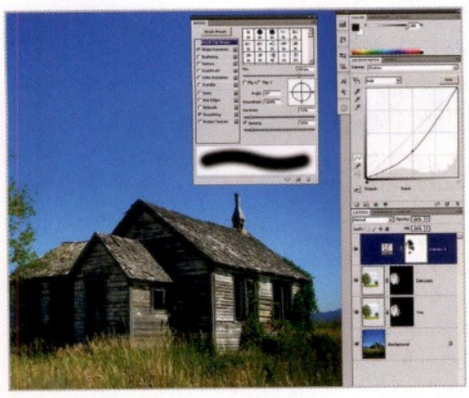
Minimum filter

11 Click on the mask thumbnail of the top copy and go to Filter>Other>Minimum, use a Radius of 1px. This pushes in the edge of the mask on the top copy, allowing the darker bottom copy to show through at the edge, removing the halo.



Lighting adjustment

12 Hold down the Opt/Alt key and click the Curves icon in the Adjustments palette. In the New Layer dialog box, engage the Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask option. Then pull down on the centre of the curve to darken the tree image.



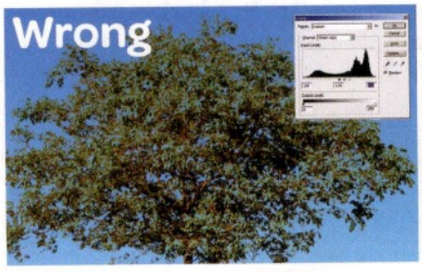
Splash of sunshine

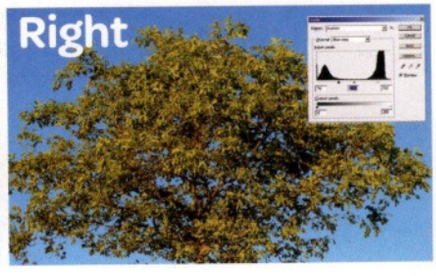
13 Target the mask of the Curves adjustment layer and use a very large, very soft brush with black to remove the darkening effect at the top of the tree. This is like painting sunlight onto the tree limbs.

What can go wrong Be selective when making selections

The channel selection technique presented in this tutorial is a very effective one, but it certainly isn't foolproof. The channel to use as the selection source and the amount of adjustment is, after all, a judgment call.

Evaluating which channel to work with is a fairly straightforward process, but only because we purposely selected source images with trees against a blue sky, knowing those will work best with this technique. When working with the Levels, the temptation is to keep boosting the contrast until the image is fully black and white. It's better to leave some soft grey areas and then let the double layer compositing trick handle the glowing edges.





Learn the Lomo effect

Take image distortion to the extreme with a home-made Lomo effect

Essentials

What you'll learn

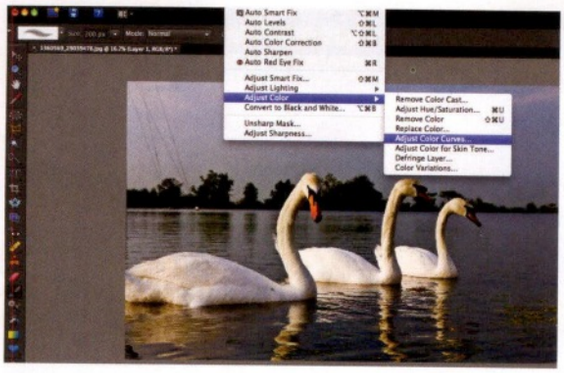
How to use custom vignettes and adjustment layers to distort images

Time taken

1.5 hours

Lomography encompasses many image effects that usually combine the distortion of colours, a dose of high contrast and heavy vignettes. The images themselves were originally taken with small plastic cameras and their popularity has grown massively – although the rise of apps such as Instagram may have played a large part in this retro revival. However, Lomo cameras are enjoyable to shoot with – but with Photoshop we're able to tweak, refine and try many Lomo effects on a single image.

And the best thing is that there's no right or wrong way to make a Lomography image in Photoshop. Anything goes, and we show you a couple of tricks for different finishes. Filters such as Blur and Grain give the distortion factor needed, and adjustments such as Color Balance and Brightness/Contrast mean the structure of the image can be altered to produce discolourations. We've achieved these effects using Photoshop Elements, but they can be created in just the same way using Photoshop CS versions.

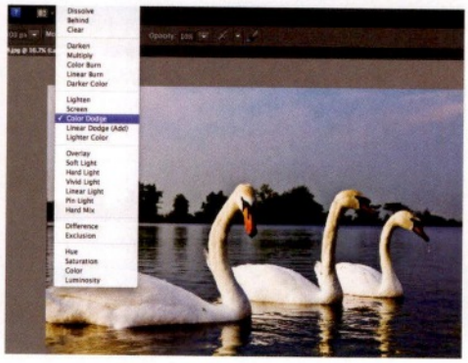


Contrast control

01 Start by downloading the swan image from **www.sxc.hu** (image ID: 1360569) and creating a duplicate copy of the Background layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J). Go to the Enhance menu at the top of Elements and down to Adjust Color>Adjust Color Curves to open the adjustment (in Photoshop CS versions, go to Image>Adjustments>Curves).

Boost sliders

02 The Adjust Color Curves dialog contains four sliders. These control various regions of the image. Push to the right both the Adjust Highlights and the Midtone Brightness sliders slightly, and push to the left the Adjust Shadows to deepen in the contrast. Hit OK to apply these effects.

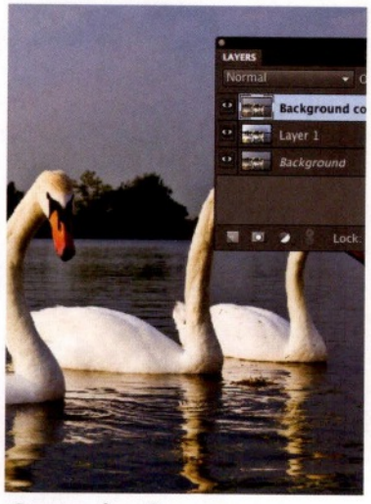


Select brush

03 Grab the Brush tool (B) and Ctrl/right-click over your image to open the Brush tips. Choose any of the Soft Round tips and, in the Options bar, set the tool's size to 1,300px. Change its Mode to Color Dodge and lower the Opacity setting down to 10%.

White vignette

04 Set your Foreground colour to white and then apply a white vignette to the edges of your image. Keep the vignette subtle by clicking a couple of times. The more times the brush is applied, the brighter the effect becomes.



Organise layers

05 To make it seem as though the image was taken badly, blurring can be added to the swans. Click on the original Background layer in the Layers palette and duplicate again. Move it to the top of the layer stack.

Alter the effect

Use other commands for variations of the Lomo effect

Using the Grain filter

For realistic grain go to Filter>Texture>Grain. The contrast and intensity of the surface can be adjusted to suit. Don't be shy when applying the filter.

Black vignette

A black vignette was applied simply by painting black onto a new layer using the Brush tool. Set the tool's Hardness to 0%.

Channel Mixer for colour

A green tint can be applied using the Channel Mixer adjustment. The effect is quite bold, and by adjusting the red, green and blue sliders, an effective Lomo image can be created.

Adjust lighting

The contrast needed a boost, so the Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer was the perfect option. This will bleach out the highlights and deepen the shadows for a dramatic effect.

Motion blur

06 Go into the Filter menu and down to Blur>Motion Blur. In the Filter's dialog set Angle to 85 degrees and Distance to 999px (the maximum amount it can go to). Hit OK to apply the blur to the image.

Blend it in

07 At the moment the image is completely unrecognisable because of the blurring. Set the layer's blend mode to Overlay to bring through the layers underneath, showing the shape of the subjects (in this case the swans).

New layer

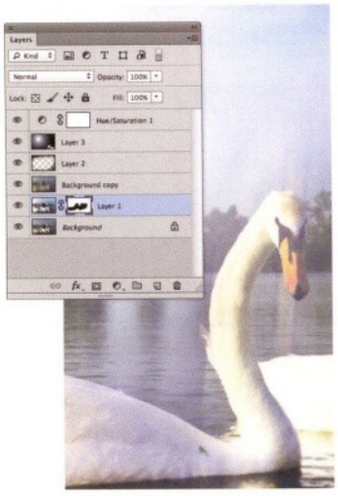
08 Add a new layer to the composition by clicking on the Create a New Layer in the Layers palette. This layer needs to be set to Overlay blend mode, as it's going to be used to darken the edges of the image.

Expert tip

Layer masking

Masks give you the opportunity to customise each layer in the Lomo effect. Take for example the blur filters used to distort the movement of the subjects. Using masks, you can bring back the sharpness of the faces of the subjects, so that eye contact still remains in the image.

Conversely, this also gives you the chance to blur just the subjects to make it seem like they're moving. Pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I with a layer mask highlighted in the Layers palette will flip it around, reversing the affected areas.



Black vignette

09 Select the Brush tool and this time set your Foreground colour to black. Be sure to change the Mode to Normal at the top of Photoshop Elements and increase the Opacity to 100%. Paint around the edges of the image to apply a thick, dark vignette.

Erase parts

10 If there are any areas of the black vignette that have been over-cooked, use the Eraser tool with a soft tip and a low opacity to remove them. Alternatively, the opacity of the layer can be lowered to reduce its impact.

Fill layer

11 To apply a lens flare to the Lomo effect, begin by adding a new layer. Fill this layer with black by going to Edit>Fill Layer. Set the Use the drop-down list to Black and hit OK. Change this layer's blend mode to Screen to reveal the image.

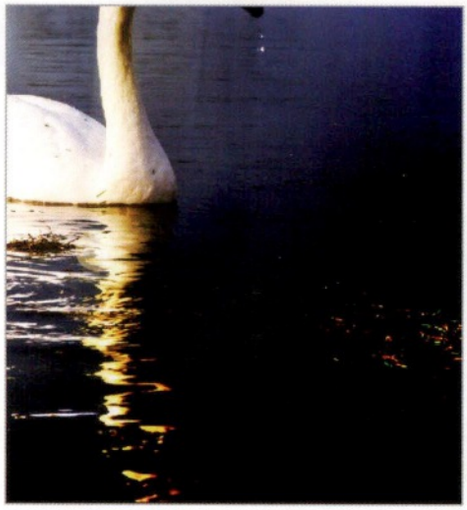
Lens flare

12 With its layer set up, go to Filter>Render>Lens Flare. Reposition the flare by dragging the crosshairs to the left side of the image. Set Lens Type to 105mm Prime and the Brightness slider to around 135%. Hit OK to see a lens flare over your image.

Expert tip

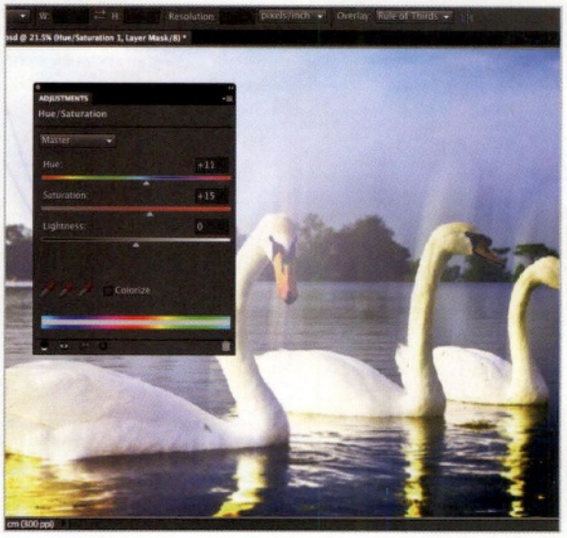
Try blend modes

Blend modes form a big part of the Lomo effect. Try out different modes to the ones described in these steps for different styles of Lomography. Where Overlay produces a stronger effect, Color or Luminosity will affect other areas. To quickly cycle through the list of blend modes, press Shift and +/- and watch the results change for the layer currently selected in the palette.



Edit flare

13 If there are a couple of specks of the lens flare which stand out too much, such as the blue circles, remove them using the Eraser tool. Try out different Opacity settings for this layer to see which works best if any of the subjects have been blocked out.



Alter colour

14 Adjusting the colour in your image can be done using the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Find this inside the Layer menu and under New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Set the Hue slider to +11 and the Saturation slider to +15 for this effect.

Blur more

15 Click on the layer containing the white vignette and go to Filter>Blur> Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 5px to soften the image slightly. Use a layer mask and the Brush tool (B) to remove the areas of blurring over the swans.

Mix it up

16 There are no rules to adjusting the colour of a Lomo effect. Change the Hue slider in the adjustment layer to push its colours. Try settings such as -15 and -120 for variations; however, be careful of losing image quality.

Alter the effect... again!

Distortion and double exposure

Lomography acts as an umbrella term for several different effects and outcomes. To get a more stylistic, warming lomographic finish we rely heavily on colour effects and double exposure. First, you should discolour your image. We used a red Color Overlay layer style. To soften the edges, paint a white vignette on a separate layer set to Overlay blend mode. Place another image over the top of the main one with the blend mode set to Color Dodge at 100% Opacity. A layer mask enables you to erase certain parts so be patient until you achieve the look you want! Once you've achieved a nice composition, work with the lighting. Go for a Lens Flare filter, positioning it carefully to get that beautiful effect. Finally, a Color Balance adjustment layer will strengthen the colours and warm up the image (select the Shadows option only).

Before

Master the Lighting Effects filter

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Refine Edge
Adjustment layers
Layer masks
Lighting Effects filter

Time taken

2 hours

Learn how to add stunning lighting effects worthy of a jungle king

Big cats in general – and lions in particular – carry a sense of drama and regality other animals can only envy. One of the benefits of being king of the jungle is never having to pose for portraits. Lions are naturally photogenic, but notoriously uncooperative at photo sessions. Photographers must take what they can get and be happy with it.

In the following pages, we'll show you how to start with a photo of a lion in good lighting and transform it into a dramatic scene worthy of the venerable cat. Along the way you will learn how to utilise image luminosity to make highlight selections and the easiest way of extracting fur from a background. There are even a few tools used in unconventional ways to open up your creative abilities.

The starter image is provided on the resource disc and is already quite impressive in itself. This tutorial will walk you through the process of extracting the subject from the background and adding dramatic flair with the Lighting Effects filter. We will present a technique that enables you to effectively paint realistic shadows onto the lion and even brush backlighting directly onto the edges of the mane.

Feline facial care

01 Begin with the file from the resource disc called 'Lion.jpg'. Open it up and use the Healing Brush to remove any unsightly blemishes or distracting spots from the lion's face.

Out of Africa

02 Use the Quick Selection tool to select the lion. When you have all of the body and head covered, press the Refine Edge button to activate the dialog box. Now use the Radius slider to adjust the selection until it captures the fur but leaves the background. Set Output to Layer Mask and hit OK.

Expert tip

Squash the marching ants line

This tutorial requires a lot of work with selections. If you find the way Photoshop displays the selection boundary (known as the marching ants) distracting, try turning it off. Ctrl/Cmd+H will toggle the visibility of the selection edge. Keep in mind the selection is still active and working, you just can't see the edge. This can cause issues if you are not careful – if you forget you have an active selection and try painting outside of it you are in for some confusing times!

Load and save luminosity

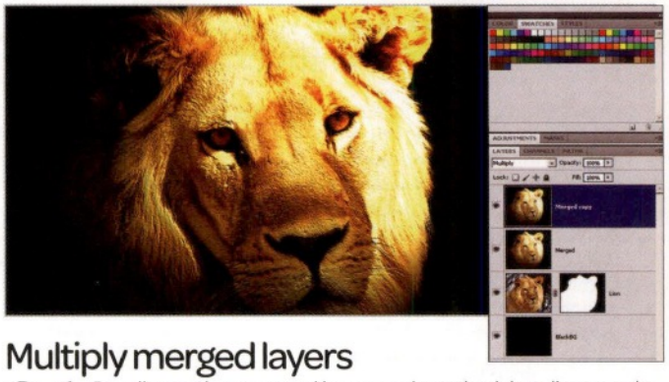
03 Add a layer beneath the lion by creating a new one and dragging it down, then fill it with black. Switch to the Channels panel and Ctrl/Cmd-click on the top composite channel to load the image luminosity. Go to Select>Save Selection and name the new channel Lumin.

Merged layer

04 Switch back to the Layers palette and press Ctrl/Cmd+D to cancel the selection. Now create a merged layer on top of the stack by first making sure the lion layer is the focus and pressing Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+Shift+E.

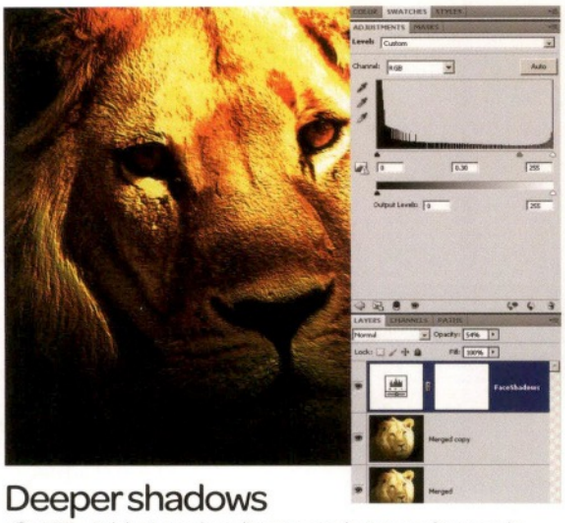
Lighting Effects

05 Now Go to Filter>Render>Lighting Effects. Begin with the default spotlight and reposition it to suit your animal. Set the colour to a pale yellow, Intensity to 37, Focus 3, Gloss 34, Material 14, Exposure -2 and Ambience 10. Set Texture Channel to Lumin and Height to 16.



Multiply merged layers

06 Duplicate the merged layer and set the blending mode of the duplicate layer version to Multiply. This enhances the lighting effect and deepens the colours. If the effect looks too strong to suit you, reduce the opacity of the duplicate layer.



Deeper shadows

07 Add a Levels adjustment layer and name it Face Shadows. Move the central slider to the far right to darken the midtones throughout the image. Once again, the opacity setting for the layer provides another level of control over the effect.

Painted masks

08 Click on the mask thumbnail for the adjustment layer and fill it with black to essentially hide the effect. Now use a large, soft edged brush with white to carefully paint the darkening effect back onto the image. Focus on the regions of the face that fall naturally into shadows for a realistic effect.

Expert tip

Lighting workflow

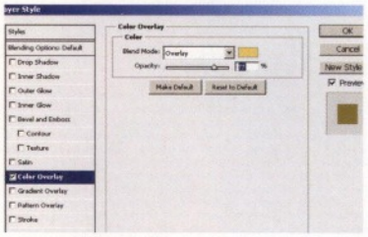
While we love the power of the Lighting Effects filter, it does have its drawbacks. Chief among them is the tiny preview window. As a result you may find a setting that looks spot on is rubbish once applied at full scale. Instead of having to redo all the settings all over again, get into the habit of using the Save button to give you an easy way to get back to where you left all your sliders before.

Artificial backlight

09 Add another Levels adjustment layer for the backlighting. This time pull the central handle over to the far left to greatly brighten the midtones until they are almost washed out. Switch to the layer mask and fill it with black to hide the effect.

Selective highlights

10 Go to Select>Load Selection and choose the Lumin channel. Then use a large brush with white paint at a low opacity to softly add the backlit effect onto the edges of the fur. The selection restricts the application of the effect to the brighter areas of the image.



Adjustment layer styles

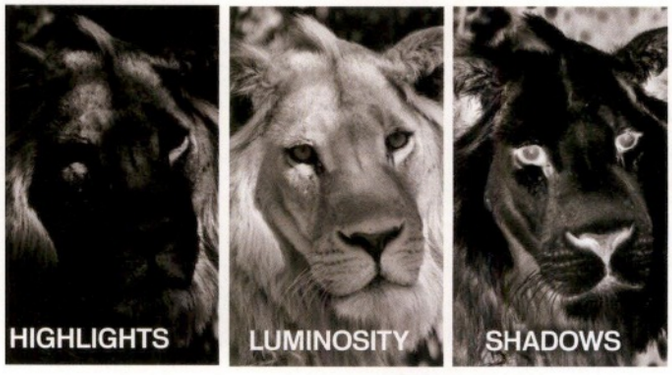
11 Add a Color Overlay style to the adjustment layer. Set the colour to a light tan and the blending mode of this layer to Overlay. Reduce the effect's opacity as needed for a subtle look. This touch provides a nice golden light at the edge of the lion's mane.

How to use luminosity masks

Get to grips with the effect and all of the options

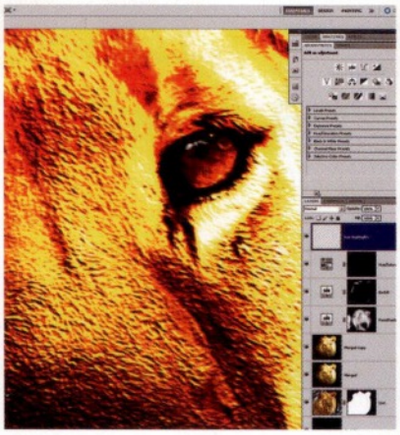
One of the most difficult things about selective lighting effects is capturing the exact range of pixels you wish to alter. It is nearly impossible to craft a continuous gradient selection that accurately follows the shades of an image. The solution is to use the luminous values of the image itself to create those selections for you. These are referred to as luminosity masks and the first step appears much like a greyscale version of the image. To select the base luminosity values, simply Ctrl/Cmd-click the composite channel (usually that's the RGB version) then save this selection as a new channel. To select the brighter highlight areas, intersect this selection with itself by holding the Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+Alt/Opt and clicking the luminous channel again.

For dark areas, select the luminosity and invert it (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I). This gives you the selection for dark areas. Intersect this selection with itself and you get the darker shadows.



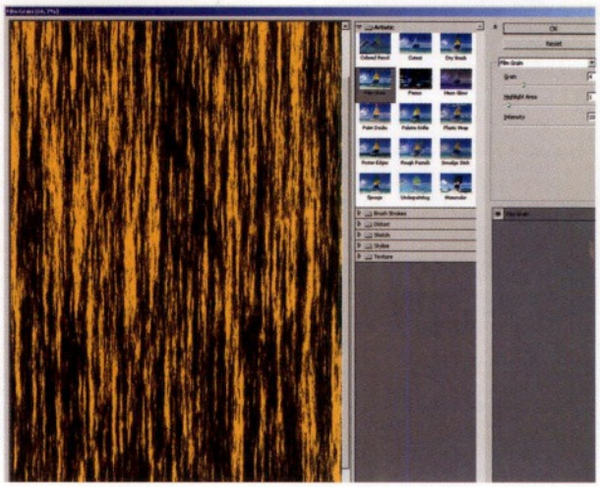
Piercing gaze

12 Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to boost the eye colour to a rich, golden hue. We used a setting of Hue +11, Saturation +50 and Lightness +7. Fill the mask with black and gently paint in the coloured effect where you want it.



Eye of the lion

13 Add a new layer for the eye highlights. Use a small round paintbrush to dab specks of white over the pupils then use the smudge brush to gently blend the edges of the strokes. Add these highlights opposite the brightest portion of the iris as shown in our image above.



Background texture

14 Add a new layer for the background texture. Set the colours to orange and black and then go to Filter>Render>Clouds. Follow this with Filter>Render> Fibers and Filter>Artistic>Film Grain. Finally, use the Gaussian Blur filter set to around 8px to complete the background texture effect.

The cat returns

15 Instead of cutting out the lion with all its assorted layers, it's an easier task to just mask out the Background Texture layer. Add a layer mask and use the Gradient tool in conjunction with large, soft black brushes to release the lion from behind the texture.

Black out

16 Add a new layer for the outer shadow. Ctrl/Cmd-click the mask from the original lion layer to load that selection. Go to Select> Modify>Expand and enter a value of 150px, then go to Select>Modify> Feather and use a value of 50px. Finally fill the selection with black and cancel the selection.

Reverse halo

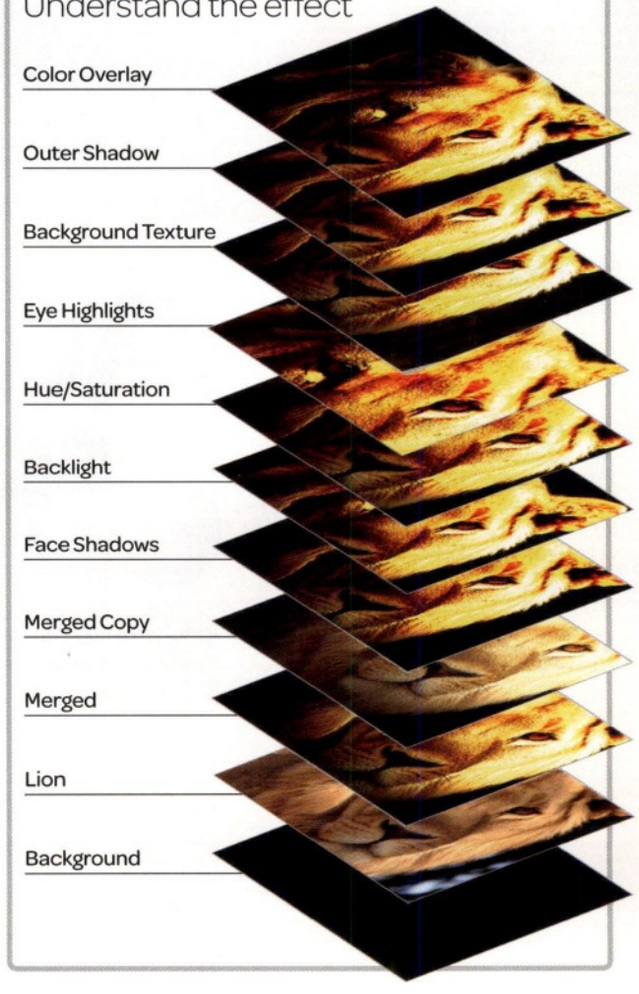
17 Ctrl/Cmd-click the lion layer mask and go to Select>Modify> Feather, 50px. Use this selection to mask out the black layer by going to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide Selection. Alter the Outer Shadow layer's opacity to separate the cat from the background, but not so much so that he appears to have an outline.

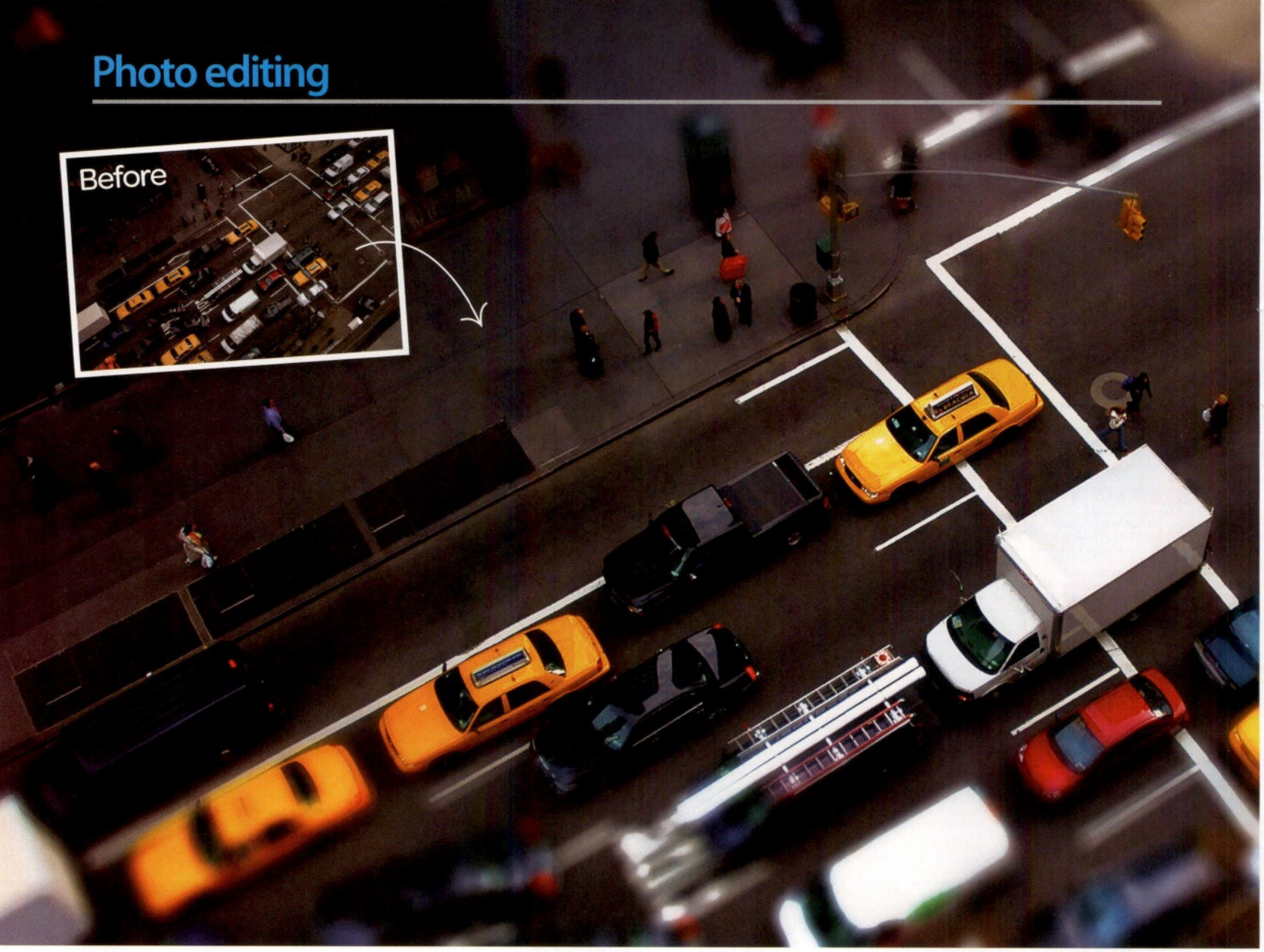
Splash of colour

18 Add a Color Overlay layer at the top and set the blend mode to Overlay. Use the Gradient tool in Radial mode with the Foreground to Transparent preset. Add a deep red gradient to the lower right and a dark blue gradient to the lower left. Reduce the layer opacity to finish.

Layer structure

Understand the effect





Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Using layer masks, Blur filters and adjustments to master hyper-real effects

Time taken

1 hour

Add tilt-shift effects

Combine colour adjustments and layer masks to create this miniaturised, toy-town image

Photoshop can be used to create all manner of effects, from the professional to those wholly recreational. One of the more fun examples is a toy town look, more commonly known as the tilt-shift, or miniature effect.

This is something that started inside a camera. Photographers would use a selective focus to simulate miniaturised blur effects. However, those without the necessary photo skills found ways to recreate this look in photo-editing software, so here we show you how to create your own toy town using our favourite image manipulator.

Basically, digital imagers found a way to cheat inside Photoshop, using its powerful tool sets to create a shallow depth of field and thus achieve this distinct style. None of this would have been possible without several key functions.

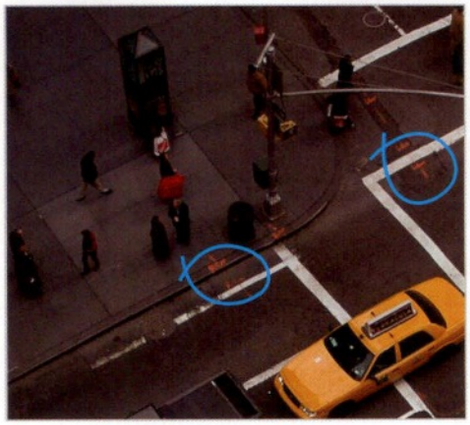
Photoshop gives you the ability to stack layers and also edit lighting and colour. Adjustment layers such as Curves and Hue/Saturation play a major role in producing our own style seen in this tutorial, as do blending modes, layer masks and the Lens Blur filter. Read on to master them all and create your own entertaining toy town photo.

Surplus elements

01 We'll start by surveying our image and noting areas and elements that will disrupt our toy town effect, or that are just surplus to our requirements. For example, the row of dead trees at the foot of the image can be dispensed with.

Time to crop

02 Select the Crop tool (C). You can simply drag and select the area you wish to crop, leaving out those areas and elements you've identified in the previous steps. We've set ours to 18cm high by 24cm wide, using guides to eye in the best composition.



Cleanup operation

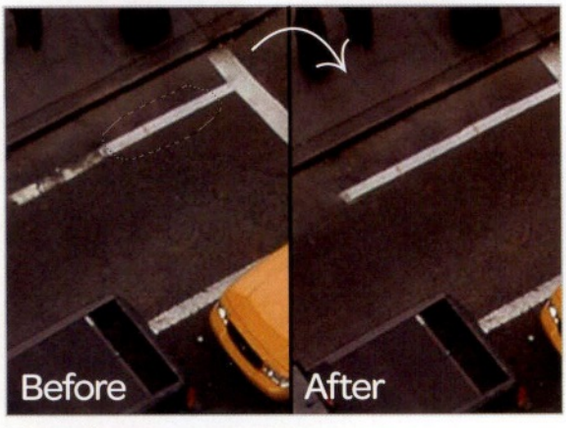
03 Model villages and toy towns have a synthetic look, even if painted extensively. Many disturbances appear in real-world photography. In this image, we have to combat paint spills and damages to the roads as well as litter.

Patch details

04 These unwanted surface elements can be easily removed. This is done using the Patch tool (J – in Elements, use the Clone Stamp tool). Set the tool to Source, draw around your disturbing element and drag your selection to a clean surface area. This will correct and clean the selected area.

Healing touch

05 You may find at times that the elements you want to remove converge with the elements that you want to keep. Applying the Patch tool may cause your edges to mix and blur – not good. Instead, carefully edit with the Spot Healing Brush tool (J) set to Content-Aware.



Repair pavements

06 You may notice that the lines in the road are broken, as are the edges where pavement slabs meet. If that's the effect you want, leave them. Otherwise, set the Patch tool to Destination and then drag from clean areas to fix broken ones.

Take a step back

07 When editing, you'll be working at zoom amounts of up to 200%. Editing can be fun yet intensive, and you'll be concentrating on specific areas. Don't forget to zoom out fully, take a breather and check your progress. Stop once you are satisfied.

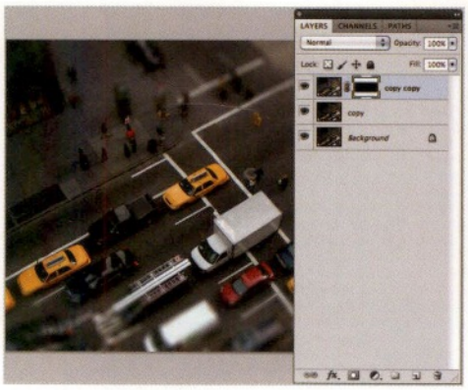
Expert tip

Vintage effect

Many people love toy town effects through nostalgia, so it seems appropriate to further experiment with looks by applying vintage photo effects. Here's one for you to try. Select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels and set Channel to Blue and Output Levels to 125. Set this layer's Fill at 80%. Select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Solid Color, adding a cream colour (#f6ddad). Set this layer's blend mode to Multiply. Finally, add a Curves layer with a subtle 'S' shape.

True Lens Blur

08 Duplicate your edited layer and select Filter>Blur>Lens Blur. Set Radius to 50, Blade Curvature to 30 and Rotation to 75. Set Brightness to 1 and Threshold to 10. Click OK and then select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M), setting the tool's Feather to 100 in the Options bar.



Tilt-shift effect

09 Apply a feathered selection to the centre of the blurred layer, and then apply a Layer Mask from the foot of the layers palette. Click on your layer mask and then press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert it. Now you have a tilt-shift effect.

Clipping Curves

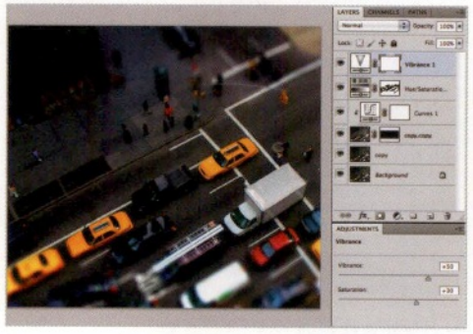
10 Select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves (in Elements, Brightness/Contrast will suffice) and apply an 'S' curve like in this example. Set your lowest point to Output: 55, Input: 70. Set your highest point to Output: 215, Input: 175. Opt/Alt-click between the Curve and blur layers to clip the two together.

Add Hue/Saturation

11 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Set colour mode to Reds, then set Saturation to 50 and Lightness to 10. Set colour mode to Yellows, setting Saturation to 80, Lightness to 10. Then set the colour mode to Cyans, setting Saturation to 70 and Lightness to 10.

Colour correction

12 As we're applying the Hue/Saturation adjustment to the entire image, this will affect other areas you don't want it to, such as the sidewalk and road. It's easier to edit this by applying a black brush to your adjustment layer's mask, rather than adding Hue/Saturation effects to each element.



Boost vibrancy

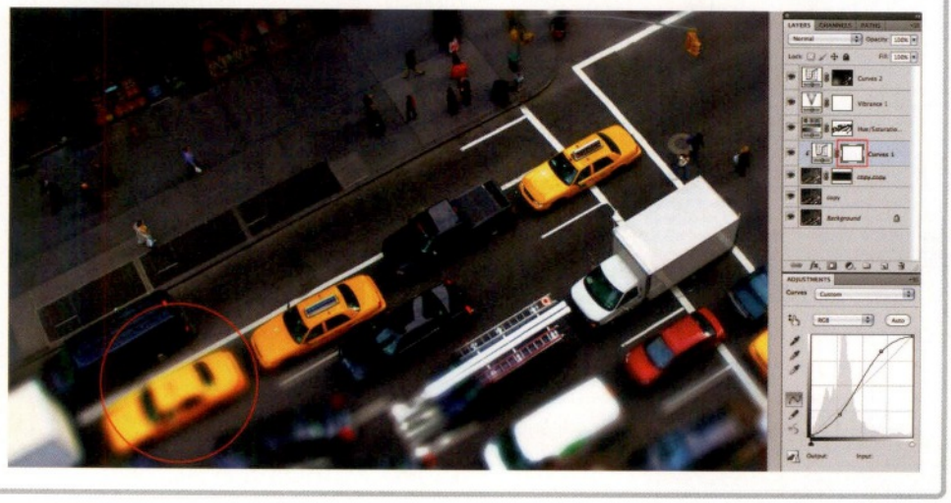
13 We've enhanced the noticeable colours in our image, but there's still a lot of grey dulling it all down. To improve the tonality in the entire image apply Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance (for Elements artists, the Hue/Saturation is fine). Increase the Vibrance value to +50 and your Saturation value to +30.

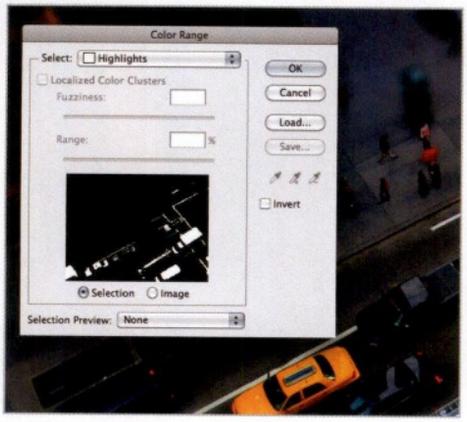
Don't over-adjust

Beware of adding unwanted blown-out highlights

The toy town effect is one of the more fun techniques in Photoshop; purely stylistic. However, this is not to say you shouldn't take creating an authentic synthetic look seriously. We can play with colours and we can create extreme camera focus with exaggerated blur, but garish lighting can become distracting and disrupt your image.

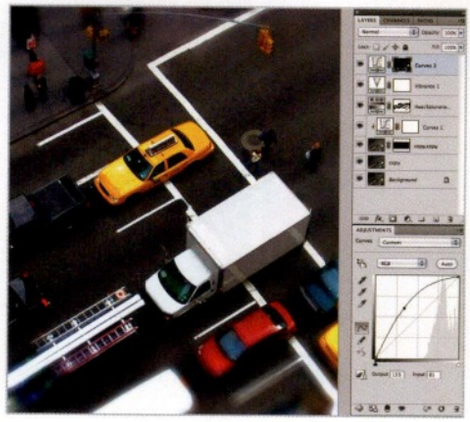
This nasty look is easy to create as you layer adjustment after adjustment, but remember: in Photoshop, there is always a remedy. This time it's the layer mask. Don't forget that one is attached to every adjustment layer and can be used to remove overly bright highlights.





Edit mask

14 Select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves and click on its attached layer mask. With the Rectangular Marquee tool active, Cmd/Ctrl-click on your image and select Color Range, and then select Highlights from the Select options. Click OK.



Target highlights

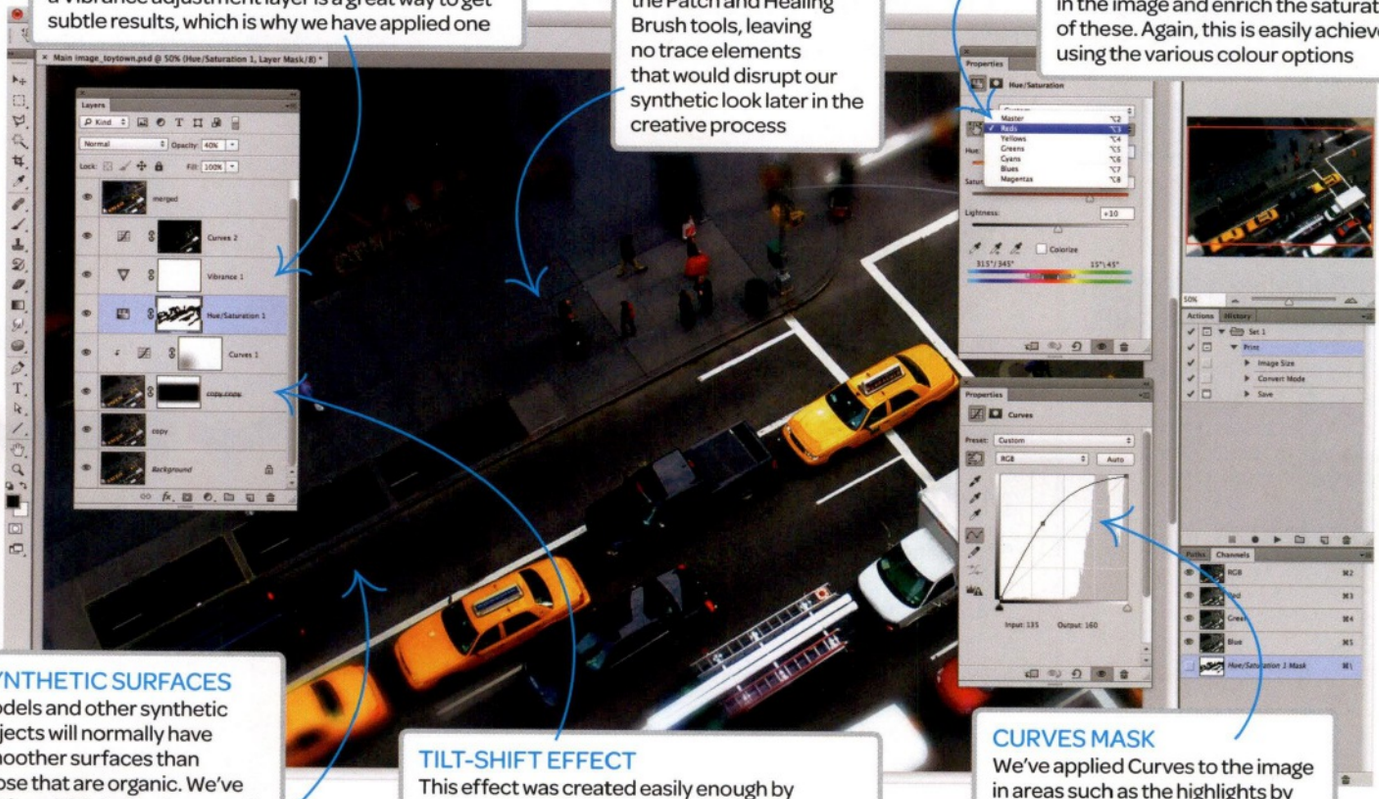
15 Your selection has been applied to the mask. Double-click on your Curves adjustment layer to open it, and drag your RGB curve up, setting Output: 155 and Input: 85. This makes white road lines denser, looking as if they have been hand painted.

Add a synthetic surface

16 Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a new layer with all edits on. Select Filter>Blur>Surface Blur then set Radius to 7 pixels and Threshold to 4 levels. Finally, select Filter>Noise>Add Noise, set Amount to 2% and Distribution to Uniform, then hit OK to complete this toy town effect.

Closer look Tiny town

Colour manipulation holds this town together



VIBRANCE LAYER

Targeting colour is one thing, but enhancing the image tonality as a whole can be far trickier. Using a Vibrance adjustment layer is a great way to get subtle results, which is why we have applied one

TIDY IMAGE

The street of our scene has been edited using the Patch and Healing Brush tools, leaving no trace elements that would disrupt our synthetic look later in the creative process

HUE/SATURATION LAYER

Hue/Saturation has been used to specifically target individual colours in the image and enrich the saturation of these. Again, this is easily achieved using the various colour options

SYNTHETIC SURFACES

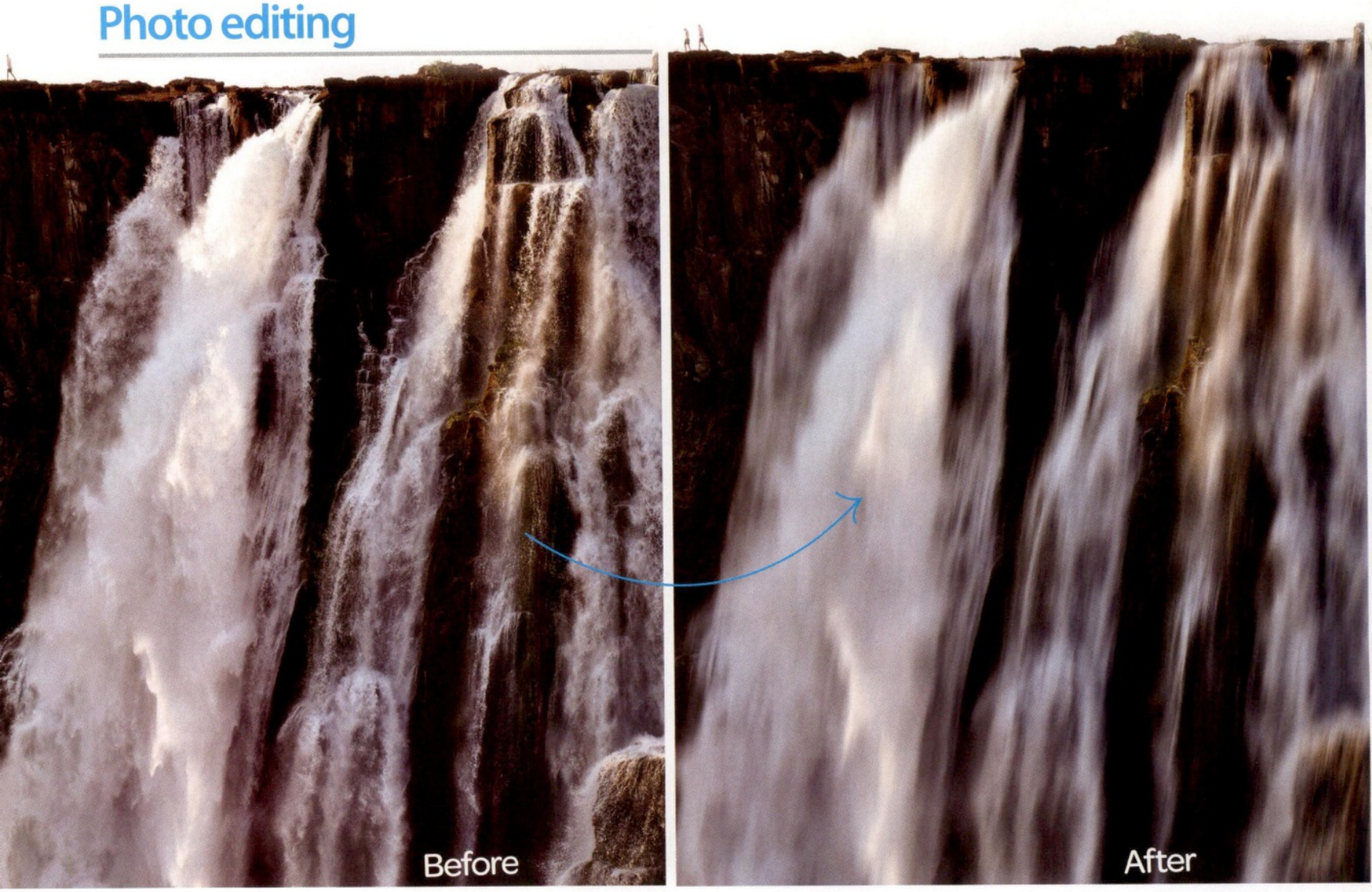
Models and other synthetic objects will normally have smoother surfaces than those that are organic. We've achieved this look using one of the smoothing options – the Surface Blur filter

TILT-SHIFT EFFECT

This effect was created easily enough by applying a layer mask and a selection set to Feather: 200px. This had previously been added to a layer treated with the Lens Blur filter

CURVES MASK

We've applied Curves to the image in areas such as the highlights by activating our Curves layer mask and using the Color Range option. Any selections will clip to the mask



Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use the Motion Blur filter, quick mask mode and the Magic Wand tool to blur a waterfall

Time taken

15 minutes

Create movement

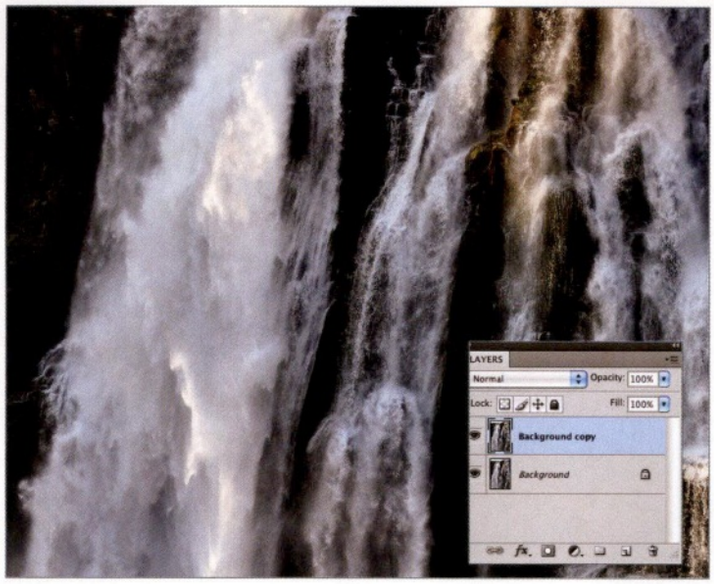
Make silky-looking water using filters and masking techniques

Trying to capture the movement of water in a dynamic and effective image is not as easy as it sounds. You need a tripod to stable the camera and you also need to be able to slow down shutter speed considerably to capture the water's motion.

Instead, next time you come across flowing water and you don't have these tools available to help you out, just capture the image as normal with everything completely still. Take the image into Photoshop and then use these techniques to create a customised and realistic long-exposure effect.

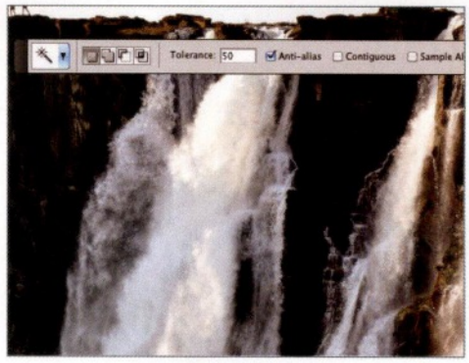
The techniques used for this look mean that the movement added to the water can be positioned in all the right places. Using a layer mask, the water and rocks can be easily and non-destructively separated from each other, so there's minimal overlapping.

Access the image used here from the disc at the back of the book, or use one of your own photographs. The image doesn't need to contain water, as the Magic Wand tool can be used on most objects. If this tool isn't quite working for you, we recommend trying out the Color Range method in the Select menu.



Make duplicate

01 Open up the start image of the waterfall from your disc. Because the movement is only going to be applied to the water and nothing else, drag the Background layer onto the Create a New Layer button in the Layers palette. There should now be two layers, one locked and one editable.

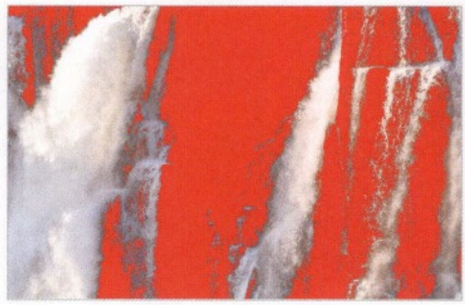


Make some waves

02 We need to make a selection of just the water in this image. Choose the Magic Wand tool and head to the Options bar. Set the tool's Tolerance value to 50. Tick the Anti-alias box but make sure Contiguous is deselected at the top of the screen.

Select water

03 Now the Magic Wand tool is set up, click once over the brightest part of the water. To select more of it, hold down Shift and then click on a slightly darker part. Try to avoid selecting the rocks and don't worry if the fainter areas of water are left out as we can bring these back later.



Quick Mask mode

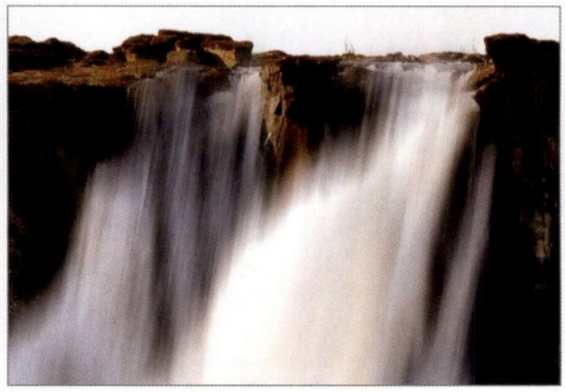
04 Press Q to enter Quick Mask mode to reveal the selection as a temporary mask. Areas in red are outside the selection. You may have parts, such as the sky and the rocks, still inside the selection. To remove these, press D and select the Brush tool. Paint over these areas to apply the mask.

New layer mask

05 Press Q once more to return to the normal image mode. The selected parts should now be ready to blur. On the duplicate copy of the Background layer, add a new layer mask. This applies the selection to a mask, shown by a black and white thumbnail on the layer.

Apply movement

06 Click on the thumbnail of the image on this layer, as we don't want to mask the selected object. Now go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur to open up the controls for the movement effect. Set Angle to 81, Distance to 112px and hit OK. You should now see the water areas blur in a downward motion.



Brush up effect

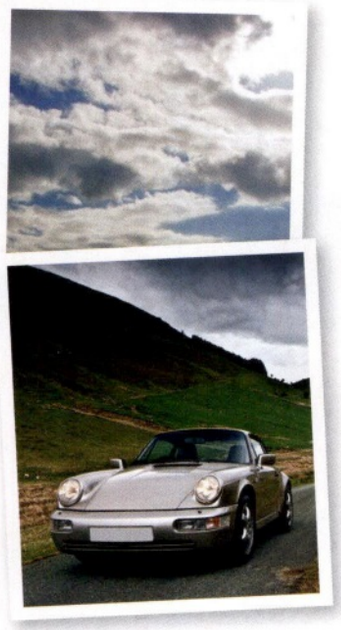
07 Blurring will likely need to be added to other areas. You can do this by selecting the mask's thumbnail on its layer and then selecting the Eraser tool. With black as the Foreground colour, brush over parts of the water to increase their blurriness. Lower brush size for more accuracy.

Expert tip

Realistic results

Editing the layer mask with the Brush and Eraser tools is key. Use the Eraser tool with a small Diameter to reach tricky areas of the waterfall. By using the Brush tool, you can bring back rocks in between the falling water. You can even lower the Opacity setting of the Eraser and Brush tools to 50% or less for creating subtle blurring. Keep some parts of the waterfall less blurred and remove any hard edges created from the Motion Blur filter by using a low opacity.

Before images



Liven up a dull image

Turn a dull shot into a vivid image with some clever techniques

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use adjustment layers, the Pen tool, a Lens Flare and layer masks to create this in-depth photomanipulation

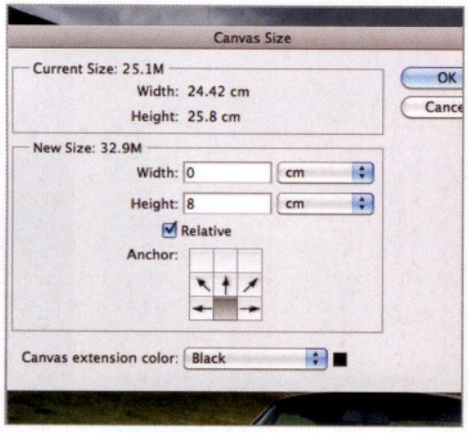
Time taken

2.5 hours

Learning how to manipulate the light is an essential part of successful photograph editing. It enables us to take an ordinary image and give it a change of atmosphere without making any other alterations to subject or setting. If a photograph's lighting is sub-standard, it will almost always produce a dull image, so learning how to alter the light is a vital skill.

We used a car for this tutorial, but you can apply the following techniques to any subject whatsoever, including people. We've supplied you with the start images on your disc, so you can follow what we've done step-by-step. There is a lot to get stuck into, from using adjustment layers to alter colour and mood to various tools, such as the Pen for creating selections that tie layers together. Once you have the Pen tool mastered, nothing can stand in your way!

For Photoshop Elements users, this tutorial is still possible, but some clever workarounds will be needed. With no Pen tool, the Magic Wand makes a sufficient substitute. Using the Refine Edge commands will help get an accurate selection, and as there's no Channels palette for saving your selections into, use the Load and Save commands in the Select menu.

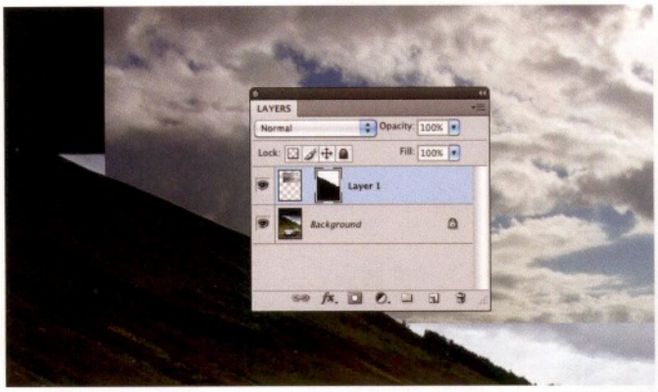


Extend canvas

01 To start with, open up the car and sky images from your disc. On the car shot, go to Image>Canvas Size. Enter 8cm in the Height field and click on the downward-pointing arrow under Anchor. Set Canvas extension to black and hit OK.

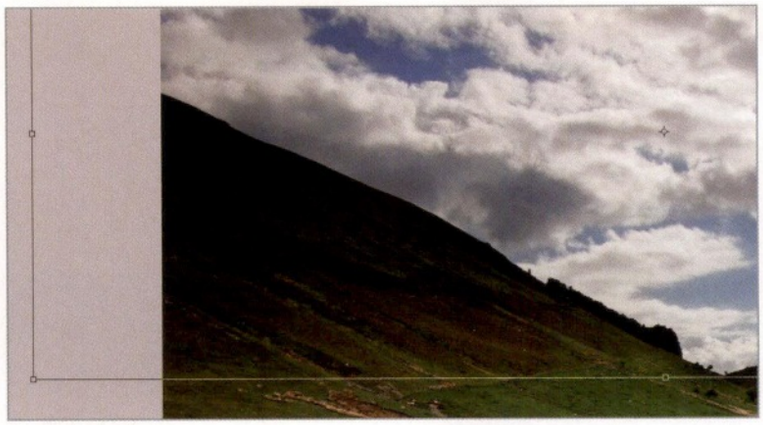
Select sky

02 Pick the Quick Selection tool and draw an area over the sky in the car image, covering the newly extended canvas. Press Q to view the selection in Quick Mask mode, and use the Brush tool to add to the far-left edge of the hill to extend the missing part. Press Q to exit this mode.



Insert new sky

03 Open up the sky image and use the Move tool to drag it over to the car image. Before moving or resizing the new sky to fit in the area, add a layer mask to apply the active selection. Click on the chain link next to the mask on the layer to detach it from the image's thumbnail.

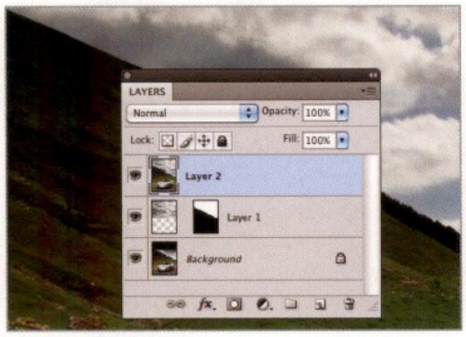


Resize sky

04 Make sure the thumbnail of the sky is highlighted and not the mask, and then go to Edit>Free Transform. Hold Shift and drag the corner points of the Transform box to resize and position the sky to fit over the area. Make sure the whole area is covered with the new sky.

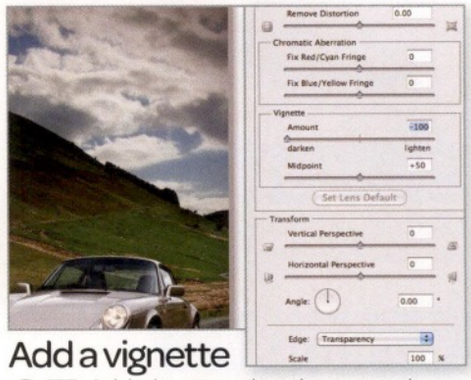
New path

05 We need to separate the car from the background. Use the Pen tool to draw a path around the edge of the car, bending each to fit around its shape. Leave out the wheels and tyres, as they will be edited later. Once the path is complete, Ctrl/right-click and choose Make Selection.



Merge visible

06 Save this selection by going to Select>Save Selection. This will now be stored as a new channel. To load the selection at any point, Cmd/Ctrl-click on its channel. To merge everything that's visible to a new layer, press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Alt/Opt+E. There should now be three layers.

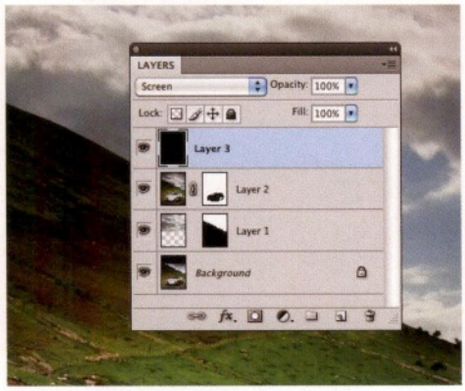


Add a vignette

07 Add a layer mask to the merged layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert it. Be sure to click back on the image's thumbnail. Go to Filter>Distort>Lens Correction and move the Amount slider for Vignette to -100. This will darken all four corners, adding to the atmosphere.

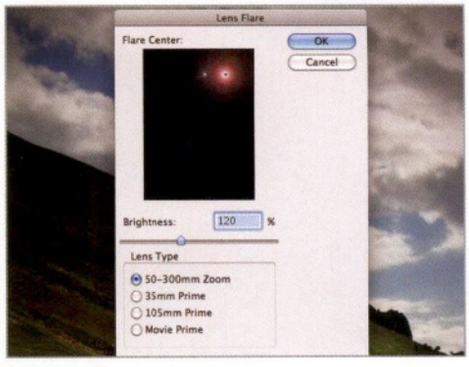
Brighten ground

08 You can brighten up the grass on the hill and the road by selecting the Dodge tool. Set the tool to 50% Exposure and Midtones in the Options bar, and then dab over these areas to lighten them up. Only a light touch is needed to change the brightness of these parts.



Fill layer

09 Add a bit of finesse to the composition with a lens flare. To do this, create a new layer and fill this with black. You can use Edit>Fill and set Contents to black to do this. After filling the layer, change its blend mode to Screen.



Lens flare

10 With this black layer in place, you're ready for the lens flare. Head to Filter>Render>Lens Flare, setting the Brightness to 120% and Lens Type to 50-300mm Zoom. Position the flare against the clouds using the preview. A bit of guesswork is needed to get this exact.

Darken windows

11 To darken the windows, create a new blank layer. Use the Pen tool to mark a path around the front windscreen and the side windows. Multiple paths can be made one after the other. When the windows have a path around them, Ctrl/right-click and choose Make Selection to convert the path to an active selection.

Fill windows

12 Fill the areas with black using Edit>Fill, and then change the blend mode of the layer to Soft Light. This will bring through some of the details from behind the car, but make them appear darker at the same time.

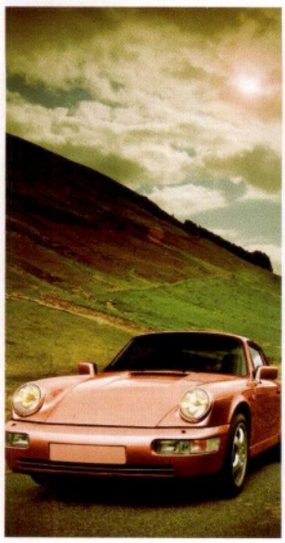
Activate channel

13 Duplicate the Background layer by dragging it onto the Create a New Layer button. Move this duplicated layer to the top of the palette. Go into the Channels palette and Ctrl/Cmd-click on the channel containing the car's selection that was saved. This will reactivate the area.

Expert tip

Different colours

You don't have to stick with the colours we used for the car and landscape. Try changing the Gradient Map adjustment's colour for the areas around the car and also the Hue for a different combination. For instance, change the gradient map to the Orange, Yellow, Orange preset and set the Hue slider for the car to 0 (with Colorize ticked) and this should give an orange tint. Boost the Saturation to 45 and see how the image takes on a whole new atmosphere.

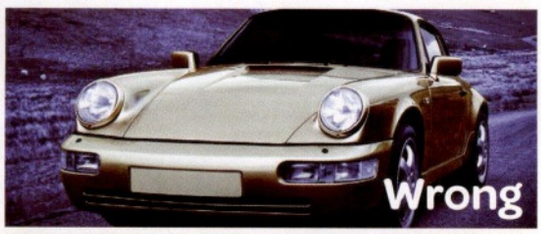


Improve lighting

14 Add a layer mask to the duplicated Background. Notice how the active selection is applied to the mask. Change the blend mode of this layer to Soft Light. This will make the car's lighting more dramatic, for both its body and the windows.

Hue/Saturation adjustment

15 Ctrl/Cmd-click on the layer mask just made to reactivate it as a selection. Add the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer using the small icon at the base of the Layers palette. The car outline will be applied instantly to the adjustment's mask. Change the blend mode of the adjustment to Color.



What can go wrong

Inverting and editing masks

Masks play a vital role in this tutorial, but they can prove problematic. Each adjustment layer comes ready with a mask to be used, which is what makes them so versatile. Be aware of the colour of your Foreground and Background swatches. When it comes to applying selections to masks and editing them, these swatches need to be pure black and white. If an effect has been applied to the wrong part of your image, try flipping these swatches around using the X key, and then try again. Remember that Opt/Alt+Backspace applies the Foreground colour to a mask and Cmd/Ctrl+Backspace applies the Background colour.

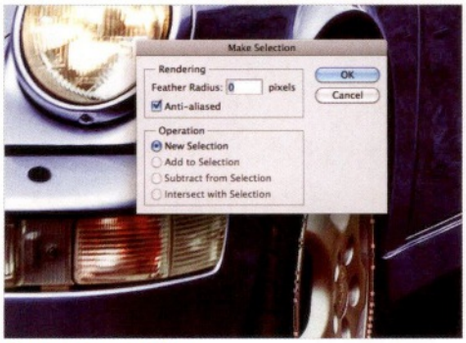
Editing the wheels

The wheels of the car can be edited in a number of ways. By selecting them separately from everything else using the Pen tool, they can be masked from the image and have either a Brightness/Contrast adjustment applied to them, or be given a new colour.

What's important about using the Pen tool is the accuracy it gives around an object; seamlessly merging the changes together. Here's how to give the wheels a gold tint, for that flashy and expensive look.

Select wheels

The Pen tool allows each wheel to be selected with a path. Start at the top of the wheel and work your way around, holding down Ctrl/Cmd if you need to adjust the curvature of each line.

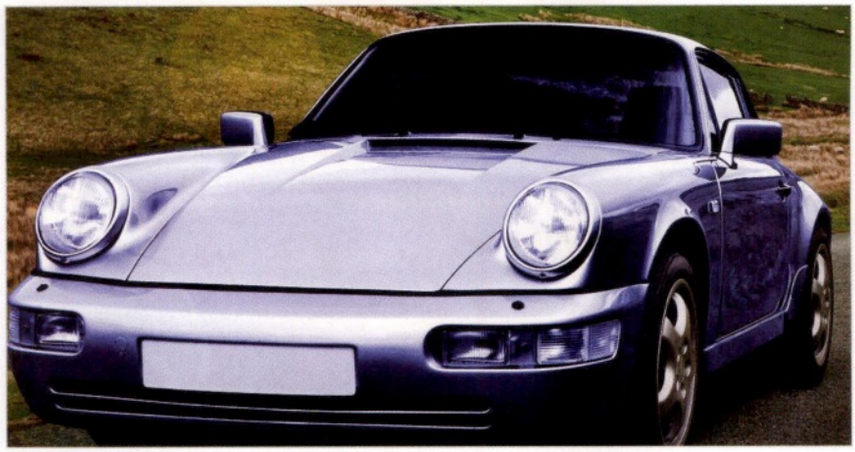


Convert paths

Convert the paths to a selection (hold Ctrl/Cmd and drag a box over both wheels, then Ctrl/right-click and choose Make Selection). Now add a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and tick the Colorize option.

Gold hubcaps

For a gold tint, set Hue to 58 and Saturation to 30. This can, of course, be set to any other colour just by sliding the Hue up and down. If you don't see any changes, move the adjustment layer up or down the Layers palette.



A new look

16 Inside the Hue/Saturation adjustment, tick the Colorize box. You'll notice that the entire car will be given a wash of a single new hue. Set the Hue slider to 222 and the Saturation slider to 36. This gives a more vibrant blue tint to the car and replaces its grey original colour.

Show windows

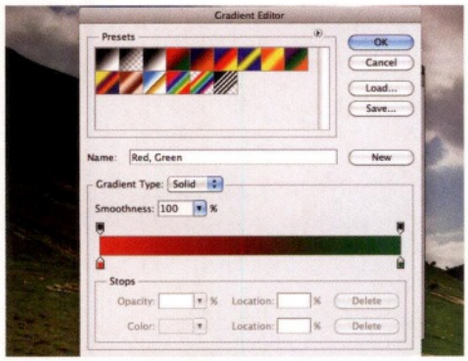
17 The windows have been affected by the new colour. Go to the layer containing the darkened windows and Ctrl/Cmd-click to activate it as a selection. Now click on the mask of the Hue/Saturation adjustment, and press Alt/Opt+Backspace (Foreground colour must be black).

Select headlamp

18 We need to use the Pen tool to make a path around the headlamps. First, hide all layers apart from the Background. Form a path around one of the headlamps using the Pen tool. Ctrl/right-click and choose Make Selection when complete to turn this into a selection.

Complete the set

19 Click on the eye icon for the Hue/Saturation adjustment, and then click on its mask. Press Alt/Opt+Backspace to remove the headlamp from the adjustment. Repeat this process of selecting and removing from the mask so that the original colour of each headlamp shows.

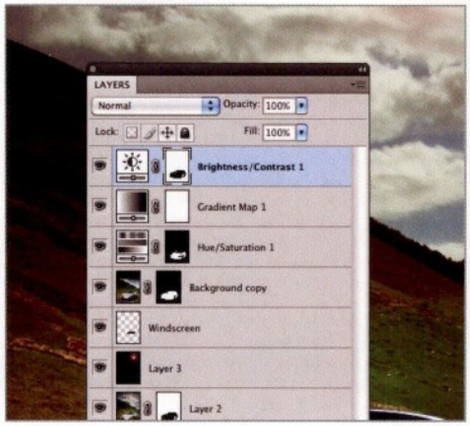


New gradient map

20 To tint the whole image and alter the mood, add a Gradient Map adjustment from inside the Layers palette. Click on the gradient's adjustment to change its colour. Choose the Red, Green preset from the Gradient Editor menu and hit OK.

Blend the map

21 With no blend mode applied, the Gradient Map adjustment replaces colours with pure green and red. Set the blend mode to Soft Light and lower the layer's Opacity to 50%. This will reduce its effect. For stronger colour, increase this opacity setting.



Final adjustments

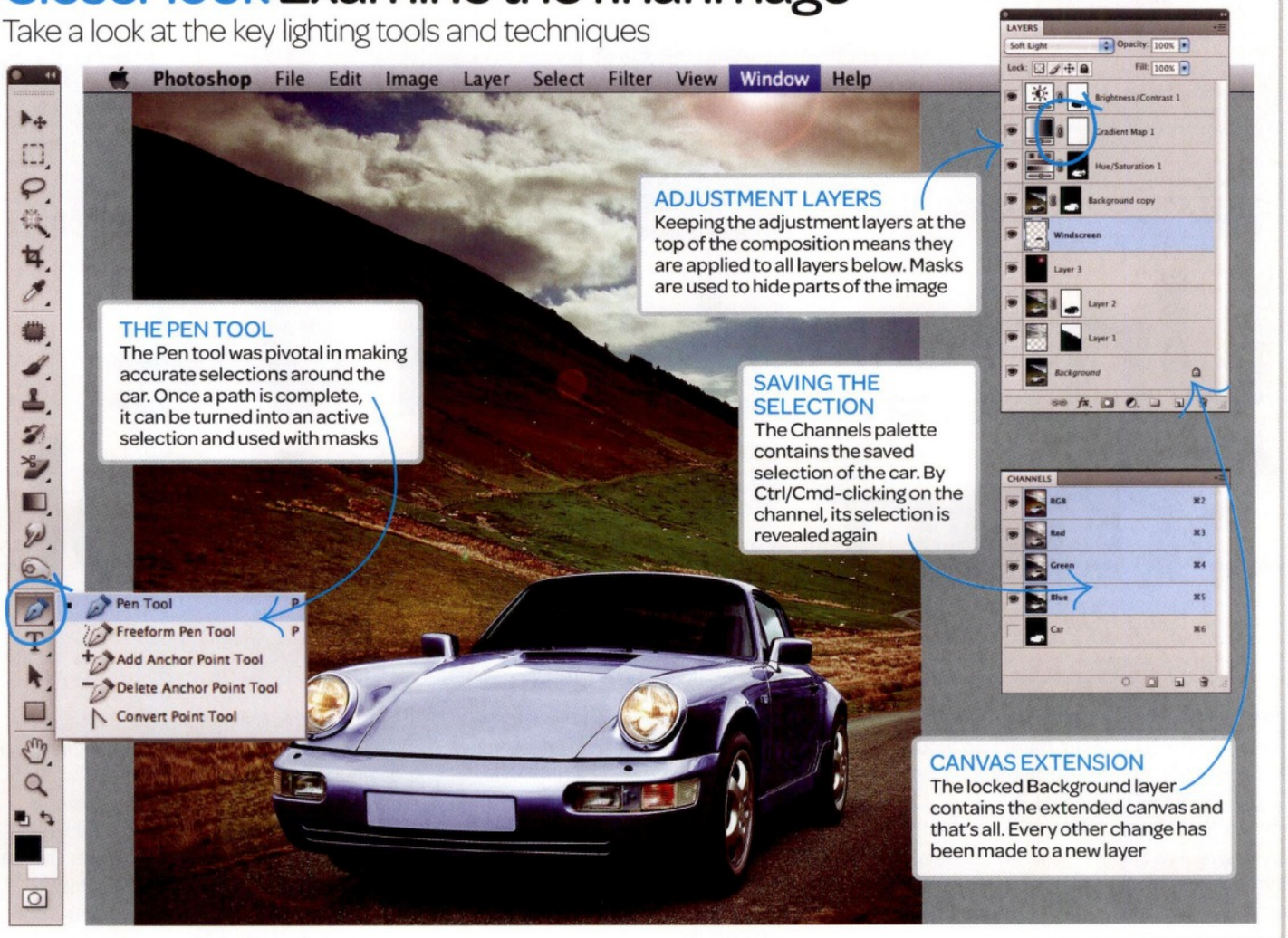
22 To increase the brightness of the background, Ctrl/Cmd-click on the layer mask of Background Copy made earlier. This will activate the selection around the car again. Add the Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer to the image and press Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the adjustment's mask.

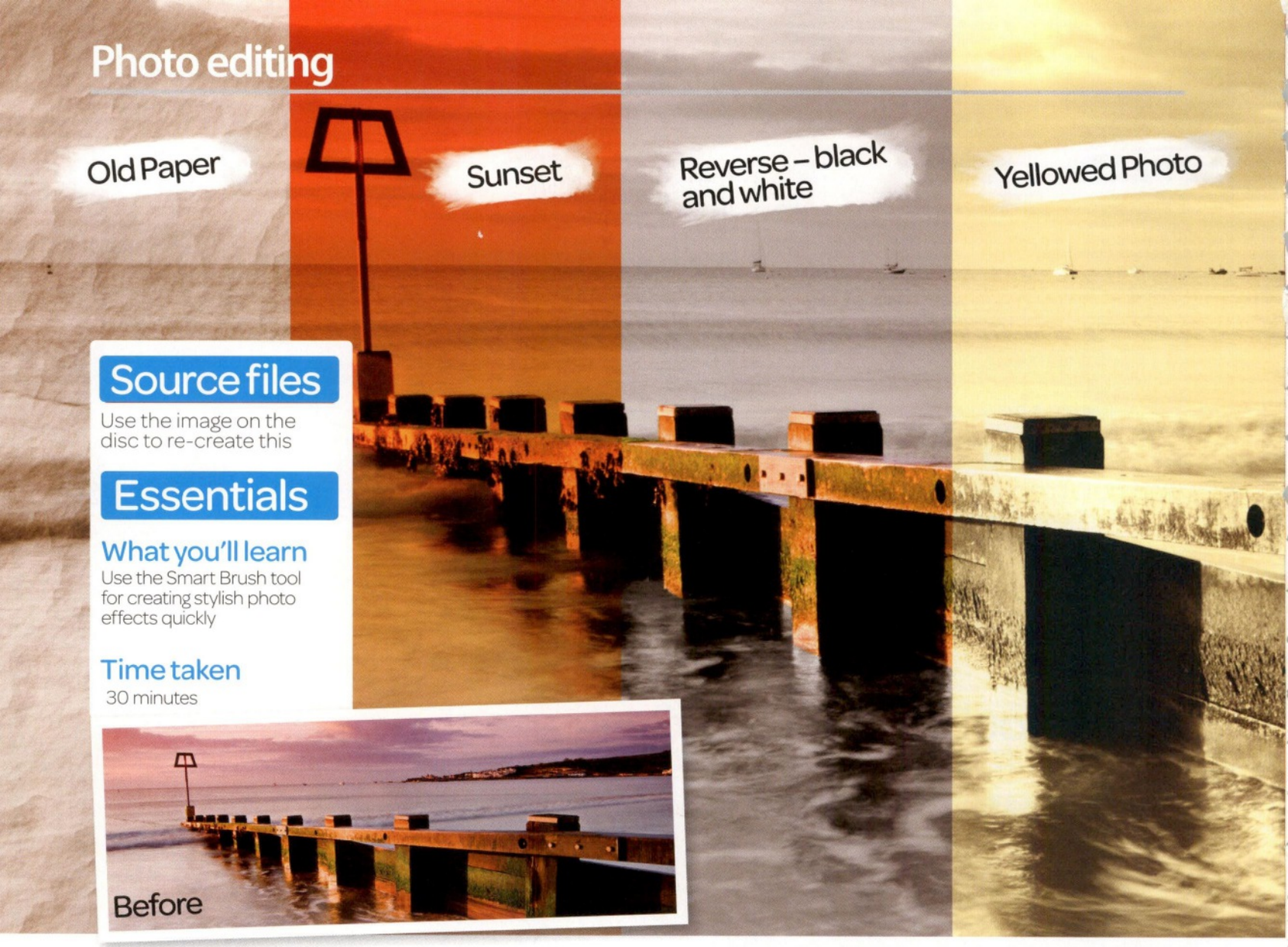
Tweak Brightness/Contrast

23 In the Brightness/Contrast adjustment, boost the Brightness amount up to 25 and set Contrast to 10. The car should remain the same as it's been masked out, but everything else will become brighter and more vivid.

Closer look Examine the final image

Take a look at the key lighting tools and techniques


Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
ADJUSTMENT LAYERS
Keeping the adjustment layers at the top of the composition means they are applied to all layers below. Masks are used to hide parts of the image
THE PEN TOOL
The Pen tool was pivotal in making accurate selections around the car. Once a path is complete, it can be turned into an active selection and used with masks
SAVING THE SELECTION
The Channels palette contains the saved selection of the car. By Ctrl/Cmd-clicking on the channel, its selection is revealed again
CANVAS EXTENSION
The locked Background layer contains the extended canvas and that's all. Every other change has been made to a new layer
Pen Tool P
Freeform Pen Tool P
Add Anchor Point Tool
Delete Anchor Point Tool
Convert Point Tool
LAYERS
CHANNELS



Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use the Smart Brush tool for creating stylish photo effects quickly

Time taken

30 minutes

Understand the Smart Brush tool

Get to grips with one of the cleverest tools Elements has to offer and learn the quickest way to apply image effects

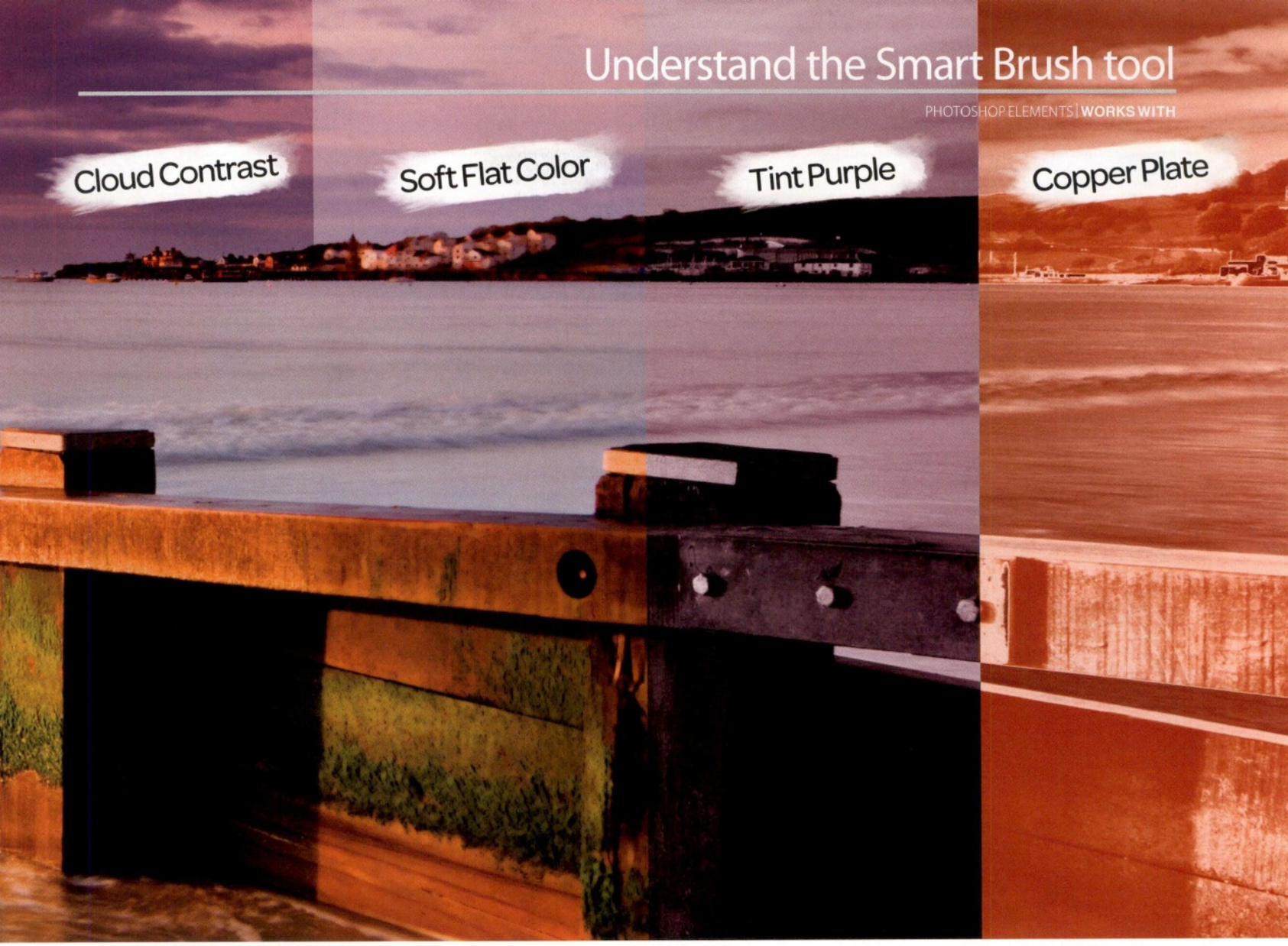
For getting started with interesting photography effects, there's no better place than Photoshop Elements. The Smart Brush tool introduced in Elements 7 enables you to apply effects instantly in the same way as a filter. However, what separates the tool from the filters is that it's capable of making selective effects in a simple click-and-drag fashion.

In this tutorial we show you how to apply not just one but multiple effects to an image using this ingenious feature. A vast array of styles can be created using selections on the masks that come with each layer. From sunsets, old textures and patterns to colour tinting and contrast adjustments, there's a lot to uncover inside this one little tool.

And as this is a selection tool, it converts whatever's clicked to an effect straightaway. It detects edges in the blink of an eye, which is perfect for selecting clothing or parts of a landscape so that you can make a range of edits with your subjects in the frame. They're adaptable too, so if the preset effect isn't exactly right you can control its colour, tone and style at a later date.

Understand the Smart Brush tool

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS | **WORKS WITH**



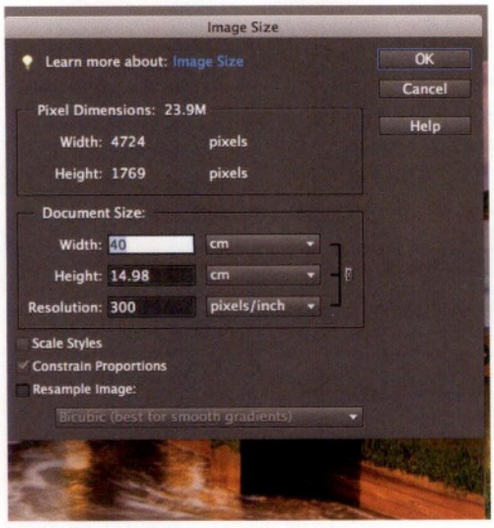
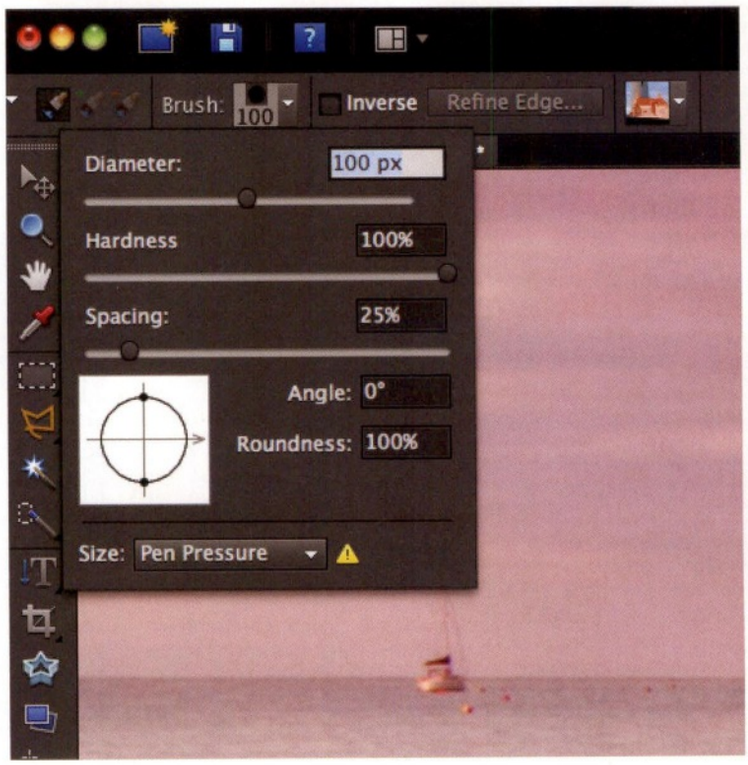


Image size

01 Grab this image from the supplied files or choose one of your own to start working with. Before applying any effects, go to Image>Resize and set the Image Size option to a Width of 40cm. This sets up the divisions evenly for later on.

Tool settings

02 The Smart Brush tool (F) is located just under the normal Brush tool, and has a small cog symbol over it. In the Options bar set Diameter to around 100px. If you need to select a small subject, decrease the size of the tool. Set Hardness to 100% and untick the Inverse box.



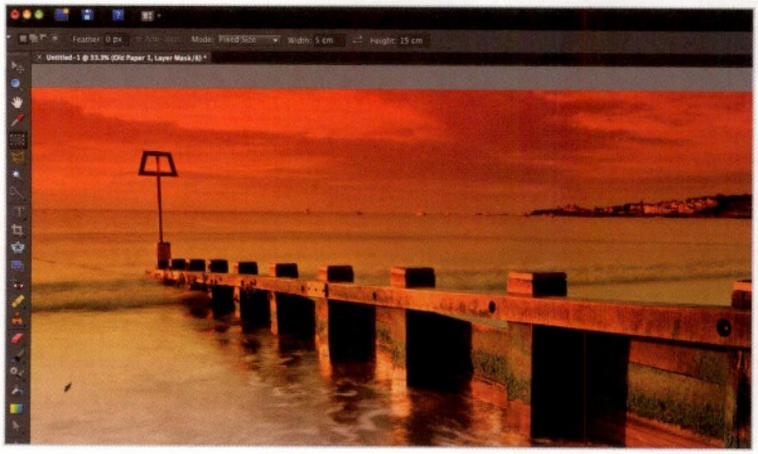
Expert tip

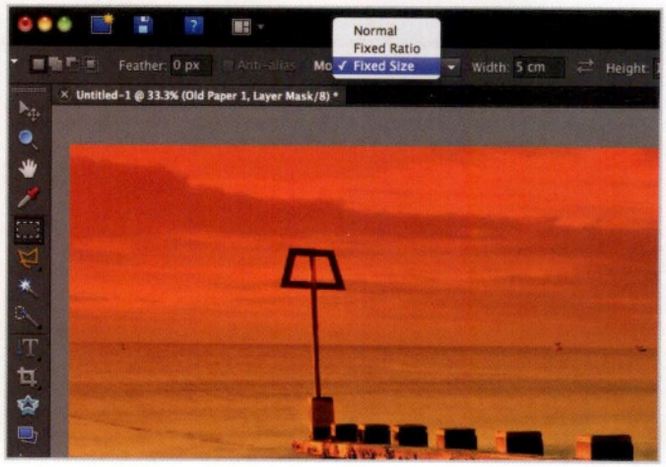
Re-edit effects

Smart Brush effects are not permanent fixtures and can be re-edited if you like. The effects have colour boxes that appear on the image. Double-click on some of these and the adjustment menu relating to the effect will open with a range of options for you to choose from. You'll also be able to add more selections to the area simply by clicking over subjects in the image to increase the effect's reach.

Choose category 03

Choose a category from the list of Smart Brush effects by clicking on the picture in the Options bar. Click on Show All and select Nature. Scroll down to the Sunset effect and highlight it in the menu.





Apply the effect

04 Click and drag with the Smart Brush across the sky to apply the effect. A selection is also created, indicating the edges of the area that the effect will work on. This will instantly transform the sky with the colours of a sunset, but you may wish to carry on the effect across the entire image.

Set dimensions

05 Select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) and, in the Options bar, set Mode to Fixed Size. Enter 5cm into the Width field and 15cm into the Height field. If you're not using this image, check the height of your image using Image>Image Size and enter this value into the Options bar.

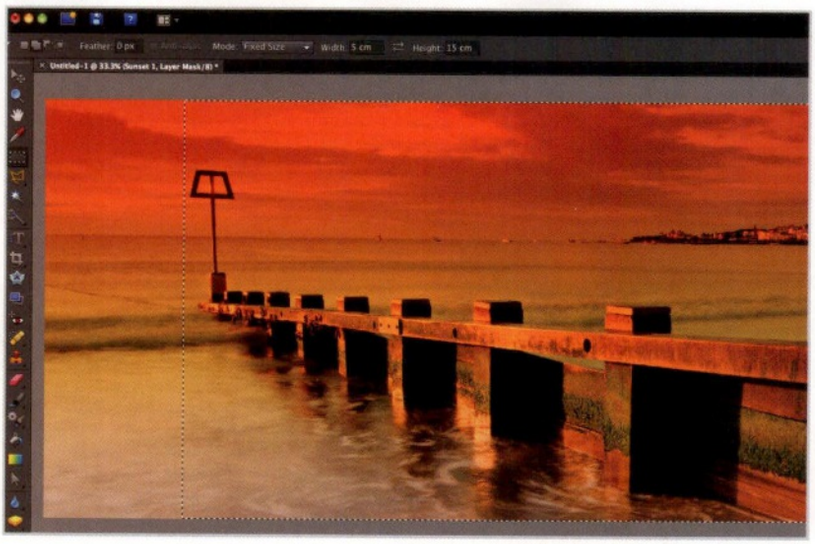
Expert tip

Share with Elements

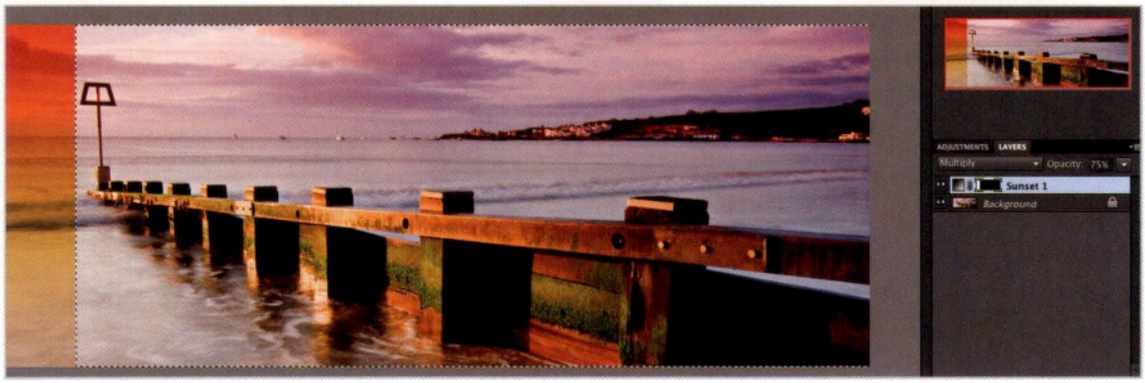
Once you've used the Smart Brush tool to perfect your images, you should share them with your nearest and dearest. Luckily, Elements offers several ways to do this with its sharing options. Not only can you share to popular social networks like Facebook and YouTube, you can also purchase and order prints, cards, and photo books featuring your images. All you need is an internet connection.

Apply selection

06 With the Rectangular Marquee tool still active, click outside the image at the top left. This will apply a vertical selection to the left side of your image. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I to flip the selection area.



Understand the Smart Brush tool

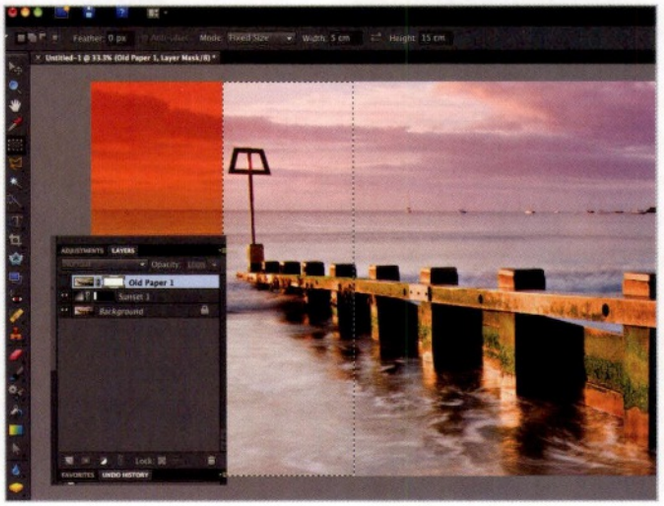


Remove effect

07 You will see that the layer created with the effect has a mask. Click on this mask to make it active. Make sure your Foreground colour is set to black and then press Opt/Alt+Backspace. This removes the effect from the rest of your image.

Additional effects

08 Click on the eye icon to the left of the effect's layer to hide it. Now click on the Background layer so that it is highlighted in the palette. Select a different effect from the Smart Brush options, such as Old Paper from the Artistic set, and apply this to the image.



Nudge selection

09 Hide the Old Paper effect and reveal the Sunset layer. Cmd/Ctrl-click on the mask of the Sunset layer to reactivate the selection. Holding Shift, nudge the selection to the right using the arrows to align it with edge of the first section.

Expert tip

Adapting the mask

Because each effect comes with a mask, the Brush and Eraser tools can be used to edit the contents. Set to black, the Brush tool will remove areas of an effect created with the Smart Brush. The Eraser will add more of an effect, enabling you to get closer to the edges of a smaller subject.

Complete the image

10 Invert the selection and delete the effect on the mask of the Old Paper layer. You should end up with two strips running vertically down the image, with a different effect on each. This can be continued along the length of your image using different Smart Brush effects.

Enhance with light

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use gradients, layer styles, the Custom Shape and Transform tools to apply lighting effects

Time taken

1.5 hours

Use gradients, filters and blend modes for authentic beams of light

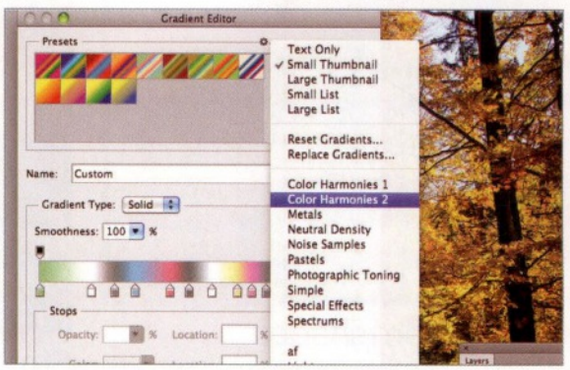
When you spot them in real life, beams of light are something to marvel at, but they can be even better when faked in Photoshop. So how do you create this effect for yourself? Well it's all made possible with blend modes and layer opacities. Combining these enables you to create a subtle effect that looks like realistic sunlight. The hardest decisions to make are how to shape it and how to choose the right tools to use. In this case we've used a custom shape that's been designed specifically for the job.

The beams are already laid out for us, so all that's left to do is to add perspective and place them to fit into the image. It's important to consider the perspective and angle of the light rays, as they should be slightly thicker closer to the ground to show the effect of the light dispersing.

This photo of a woodland area – available with your supplied images – was captured by Andreas Krappweis (**www.sxc.hu/profile/Krappweis**). Try applying this effect on your own landscape images to see what kind of atmosphere you can create.

Open the image

01 Begin by opening the start image 'Woodland.jpg' in Photoshop. We'll start by creating large, soft beams of light. Create a new layer above the Background by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N.



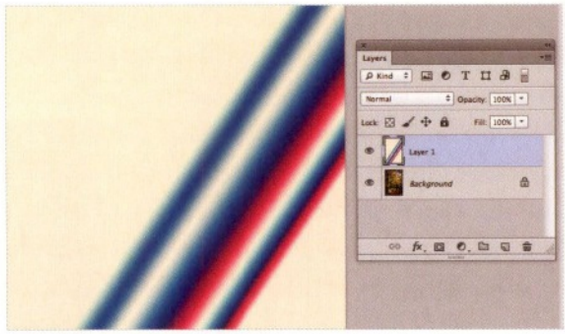
Load presets

02 Select the Gradient tool (G) and click on the Gradient Editor in the top Options bar. The tool's presets are shown at the top of the menu. Open the Color Harmonies 2 preset from the drop-down list by pressing the cog icon just above the thumbnails.

Expert tip

Customise gradients

You can edit the style of any gradient to create more intense light rays by using the options in the Gradient Editor. After choosing a preset gradient, more swatches can be added to the array of colours along the gradient's preview. It doesn't matter what colours are chosen, but darker ones create a stronger contrast when the Screen blend mode is applied. Try out other presets, such as Noise Samples, keeping in mind that your focus should be on the number of transitions rather than the colour.

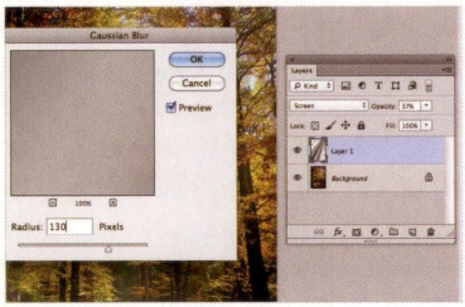


Place a gradient

03 Select the Red, Blue, White preset and hit OK. Apply a gradient across the centre of the image at a downward angle. Alter the positioning and width of your light rays, use the Desaturate command by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to remove colour and then change its blend mode to Screen.

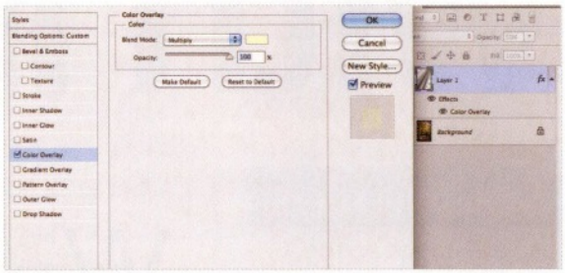
Apply perspective

04 Reduce the layer's Opacity down to 50% in the Layers palette and go to Edit>Transform>Perspective. Push the top corners of the transform boundary inwards and the bottom corners outwards, as the rays need to be wider at the base. Use the Eraser tool (E) to remove any hard edges.



Hazy effects

05 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set the Radius to 130px. This will soften the rays even more, giving a hazy lighting effect. This will be the backdrop for the stronger rays of light to sit against.

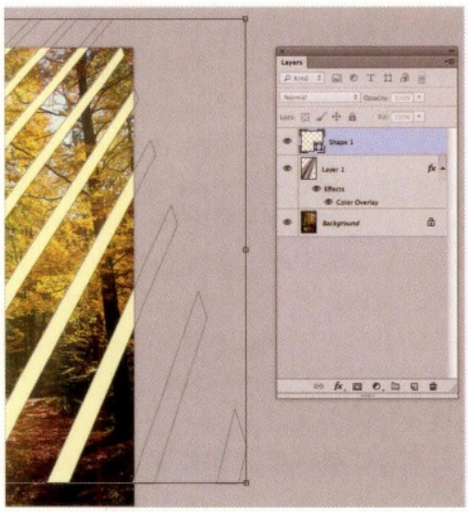


Tint the light

06 Double-click on the gradient's layer in the palette to open the Layer Style menu. Select the Color Overlay option and set Mode to Multiply. Keep the Opacity at 100% and change its colour to a light yellow (#fffdd5). This will tint the light beams to remove any white patches that were showing through.

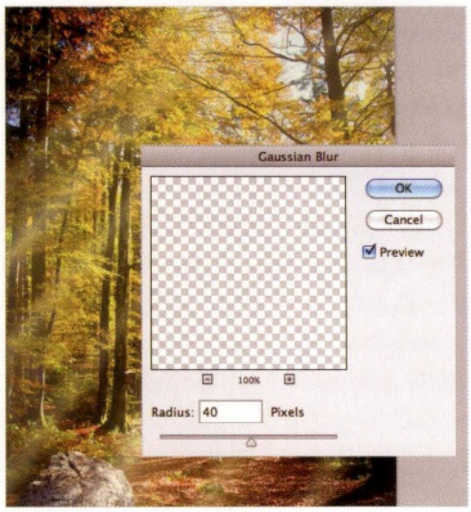
Use custom shapes

07 To create stronger rays of light, select the Custom Shape tool (U). In the Options bar, open the drop-down menu next to the word Shape. Click the top-right arrow and choose Tiles from inside the fly-out list. The one to use is Tile 2. Set the Fill colour to the yellow used before.



Stronger rays of sun

08 Apply the custom shape, covering the entire canvas. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to use Free Transform to enlarge the tile and use Perspective to make them thinner at the top and wider at the base. Set the blend mode to Screen and the Opacity to 25%.



Blur for atmosphere

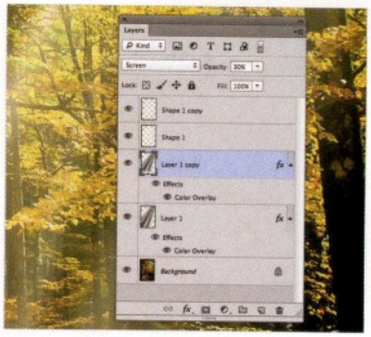
09 Go to the Gaussian Blur filter once more via the Filter menu. Hit OK when prompted to rasterise the layer and then set the Radius to 40px. This will gently blur the shape, giving the appearance of light streaming down from the trees.

An eye for detail

10 Use the Eraser tool set to 0% Hardness to remove any light streaks that seem out of place, such as over the tree. You can increase the angle of the light at any stage by using Free Transform or the Perspective tool as in step 4.

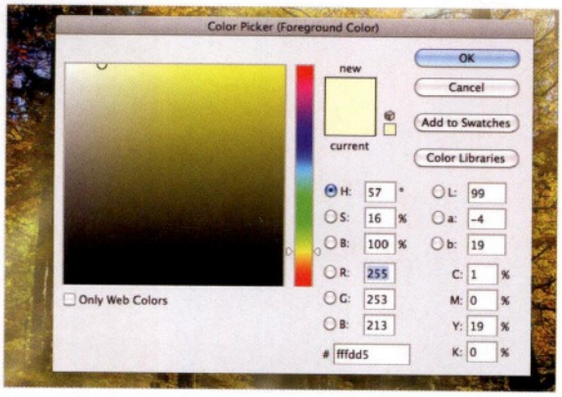
More rays

11 To create smaller light rays to increase detail, press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer containing the Tiles 2 shape. Resize the duplicated layer so that the rays appear smaller and fall in between the others, and then use the Eraser tool to tidy things up.



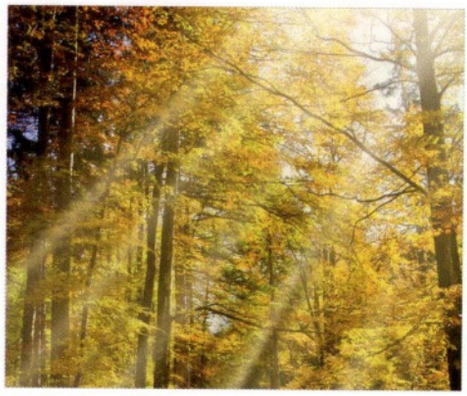
Fill in the gaps

12 Duplicate the first layer containing the gradient. Try out different Opacity settings, but around 30% should give you the right look without being too overpowering. You can use the Eraser tool, set to 30% Opacity and 0% Hardness to fade areas.



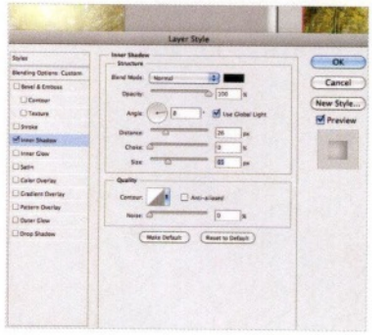
Create a light source

13 The light rays need more of a prominent source. To create this, add a new layer to the top of the layer stack and change its blend mode to Screen. Select the Brush tool (B) and set your Foreground colour to the same yellow as the layer style.



Paint on light

14 Reduce the Opacity of the tool down to 30% and paint over the tops of the trees to simulate the sun hiding behind them. This bright light source should match where the rays of light are entering the image.



Inner shadow

15 You can finish up the effect by applying a layer style to the light rays. On one of the two custom shape layers, apply the Inner Shadow style set to black, with Opacity at 100%, Size at 65px and Distance at 26px.

Expert tip

Break up the effect

Use the Eraser tool set to a low opacity to fade parts of the light rays. An Opacity setting of around 20% is ideal (you can change this in the Options bar), and when it comes to editing light, keep Hardness set to 0% for a soft edge. Erase parts of the rays to break up the beams.

Matching rays Align your rays and get perfect perspective

Because we're using both the Custom Shape and Gradient tools for this effect, it's important to keep them lined up. As long as each shape is applied to a new layer, the angle can be tweaked separately using the Free Transform command (under the Edit menu). Adjusting the perspective, so that the light rays expand outwards as they reach the ground, is done using Perspective Transform. Match the angles and directions, but vary the size to create a more realistic and atmospheric effect.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to create fantastic macro blur effects with filters, selections and layer masks

Time taken

1 hour

Perfect macros

Use Photoshop Elements to add stunning layered macro effects to your images

Most digital cameras can capture macro images, with some zooming as close as 1cm or less to the subject. But what do you do when you want to convert an image to macro that wasn't captured using that effect?

You can call upon Photoshop Elements! Here's a way to apply the effect quickly using layers and masks. Photoshop Elements can create this effect with just a few layers and the whole process is quite simple. Start off with the right aspect ratio and you're all set to make a close-up macro image.

Most of the blurring occurs in the background areas behind the main subject. However, the subject is also blurred, though not to the same extent. Using selections and masks, we're able to isolate both parts of the image and add depth.

Head to the last page of this tutorial for a quick look at the interfaces of both Photoshop Elements and standard Photoshop to see the differences. The latest version of Photoshop Elements 11 has had some big changes made to it, and looks very different to earlier versions.

Crop to size

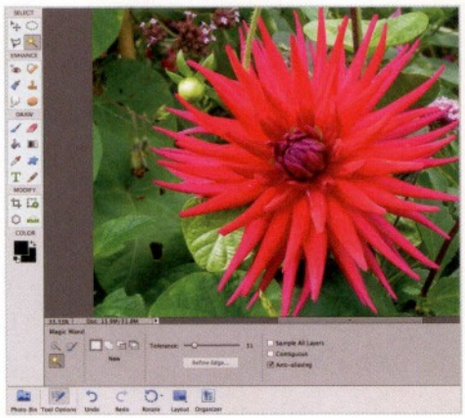
01 Open the image 'Flower.jpg'. Before we begin to edit the image, it needs to be cropped to look more like a macro image. Select the Crop tool (C) and head to the various options assigned to the tool. From the list of preset sizes, change it from No Restrictions to 8 x 10in.

Crop down

02 Click and drag with the Crop tool over the flower in the image. Aim to leave a slight gap between the top and bottom of the cropping boundary and the edge of the flower. Place the centre point over the middle of the flower. Click on the green tick to apply the crop.

Double up

03 Before any further edits are made to the image, make a copy of your image's layer by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J. Layer 1 should now appear in the Layers panel just above Background.



Magic selections

04 Select the Magic Wand tool (W) from the Toolbar (in Elements 11 this is hidden under the Quick Selection tool). In the tool's options, set the Tolerance to 50 and untick the Contiguous box, so that the maximum number of pixels is selected.

Expand the selection

05 With the Magic Wand tool ready, click once on the flower to select it. A selection should now appear over the whole flower, but some parts may be left out. Hold Shift and click on those areas of the flower that were left out of the initial selection until the entire flower is selected.

Refine the selection

06 Remove areas of the selection on parts other than the flower – such as the background – by ticking the Contiguous box. Increase the Tolerance to 80 to make this easier and then click over these areas, holding Opt/Alt to remove them from the selection.

Blur background

07 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy and paste the flower onto a separate layer. Click on the duplicated background layer (Layer 1) and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 45 pixels to blur the areas behind the flower, then hit OK to apply the filter.

Expert tip

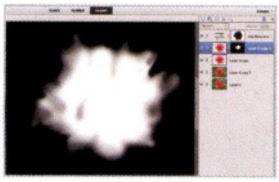
Refine Edge

Photoshop Elements has a Refine Edge option that comes with all the selection tools. After using the Magic Wand tool, head to the tool's options to find Refine Edge. Change the View to see how the area looks against various colours. Use the Shift Edge slider to adjust the position of the selection and tidy it up. For macro effects, selections don't have to be perfect because the blurring hides any rough edges.

Expert tip

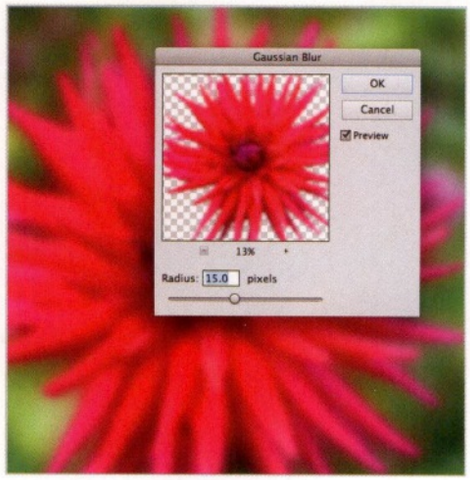
Visual clues

Opt/Alt-click on the layer's mask to reveal a black and white overlay on your image. This indicates just how soft the transitions are between the blurred and sharp parts. From here, the Brush and Eraser tools can be used to paint or remove the mask. Opt/Alt-click on the mask again to return your image to its original, colourful state.



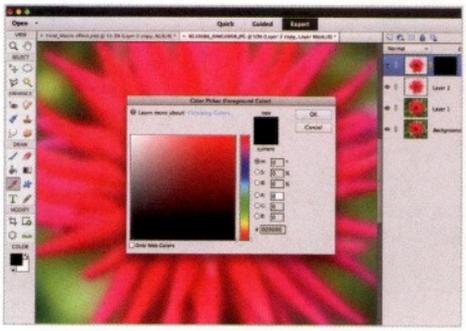
Invert mask

08 Select the flower's layer (Layer 2) and make a direct copy of it by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J. This new duplicate will contain the in-focus flower. Click on the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers panel, and then press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert it from white to black.



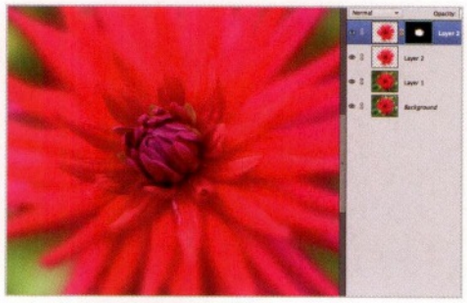
Add depth

09 To help add depth to the effect, select Layer 2 and then go to the Gaussian Blur filter again. Reduce the Amount slider to 15px, so it's not as blurry as the background of the image, and hit OK.



The Eraser tool

10 Select the Eraser tool (E) and set your Foreground colour to black by clicking on the front swatch beneath the tools. Set the eraser's Opacity to 100%, Size to 250px and choose a soft edge brush. Now select the layer mask on Layer 2 Copy.

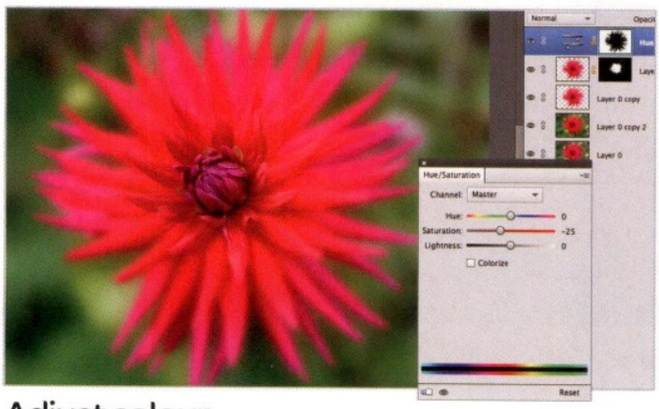


Goodbye blur!

11 Work out from the centre of the flower with the Eraser tool, removing the blurry areas to reveal the in-focus flower underneath. The layer mask in the Layers panel should show the changes in white. For areas surrounding the centre, lower the eraser's Opacity to 30% to give it a soft blur.

Flip selection

12 The background colours can be reduced to draw more attention to the flower. Cmd/Ctrl-click over the flower's layer thumbnail to activate it as a selection. Go to Select>Inverse (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I) to flip the area, so the background is selected.



Adjust colour

13 With the selection showing around the background, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Hit OK in the pop-up box and reduce the Saturation slider to -25. This will reduce the green colours, making the reds seem stronger.

Expert tip

Sharpen it up

In this image, as with many macro images, the main focal point could do with sharpening. This feature in Photoshop Elements is under the Enhance menu and is called Unsharp Mask. Set the Amount to 100% and Radius between 2-10 pixels. For high Radius values, increase the Threshold slider gradually to around 5-10 levels to lessen the effects and prevent over-sharpening.

Photoshop Elements Developing the effect in this beginner's choice software

LAYERING UP
After separating the flower from the background using the Magic Wand tool, different amounts of blurring can be applied for depth with the Gaussian Blur filter

MASK A LAYER
A mask was added to the top layer, enabling us to use the Brush and Eraser tools for customising the effect non-destructively

HISTORY STATES
The History panel comes in handy, as it lets you jump back to any point if you don't like how the effect is looking

BRUSH-LIKE QUALITIES
The Eraser tool works just like a brush, with Size and Opacity sliders for adapting its shape. This was used on the layer mask to selectively blur parts of the image

VERSION 11
This is the new Photoshop Elements 11 interface. If you're using an earlier version then it'll look very different. Additional panels are opened from the More button next to Favorites

Photoshop Using the more advanced features in Photoshop

EXTRA CONTROL
The Color Balance adjustment (Layer>New Adjustment Layer) gives the freedom to tweak colours in the highlight, midtone and shadow regions for just the flower

SMART FILTERS
Use Smart Filters (Filter>Convert for Smart Filters) for any layer, so that settings can be readjusted at any stage. Double-click on the Smart Filter's layer and the options will open

ANY DIFFERENCE?
The final image is just as good as the one made in Elements. One big difference is that Photoshop contains more options for making selections and controlling colour such as Color Range from the Select menu

CHOOSE A CHANNEL
The Channels palette shows which areas of the image are found under the colours red, green and blue. Cmd/Ctrl-click over one of the channels to activate it as a selection

Digital art

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Transform your photos by mixing traditional with digital

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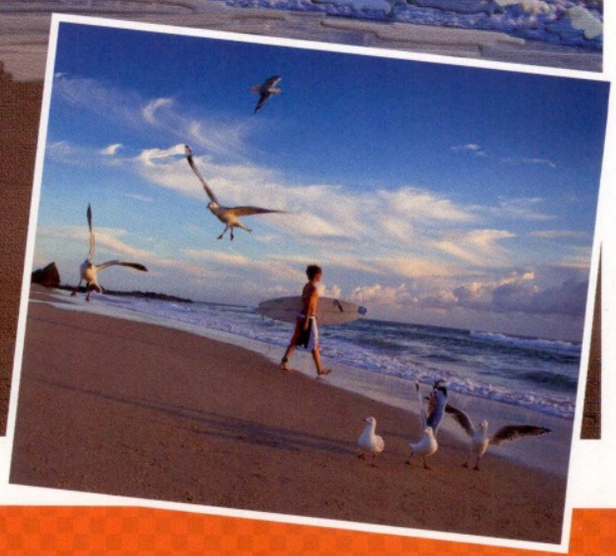
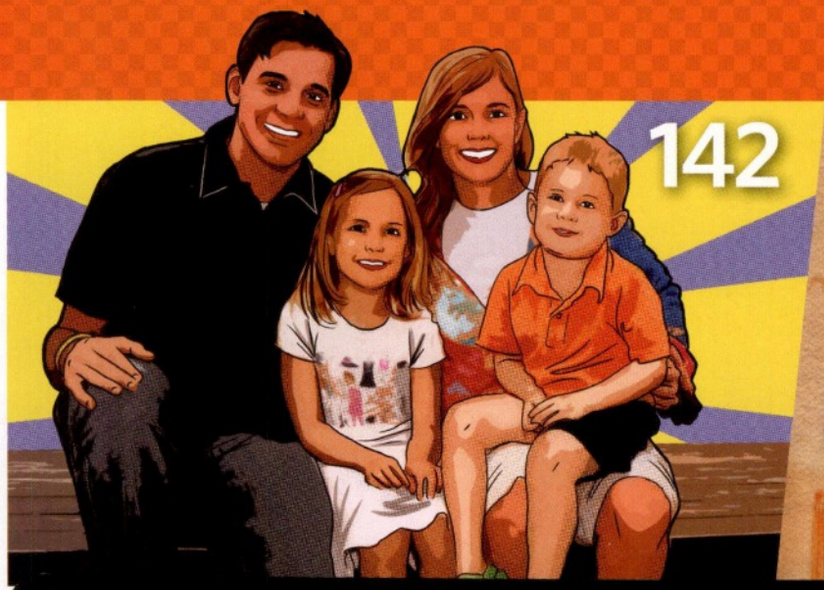
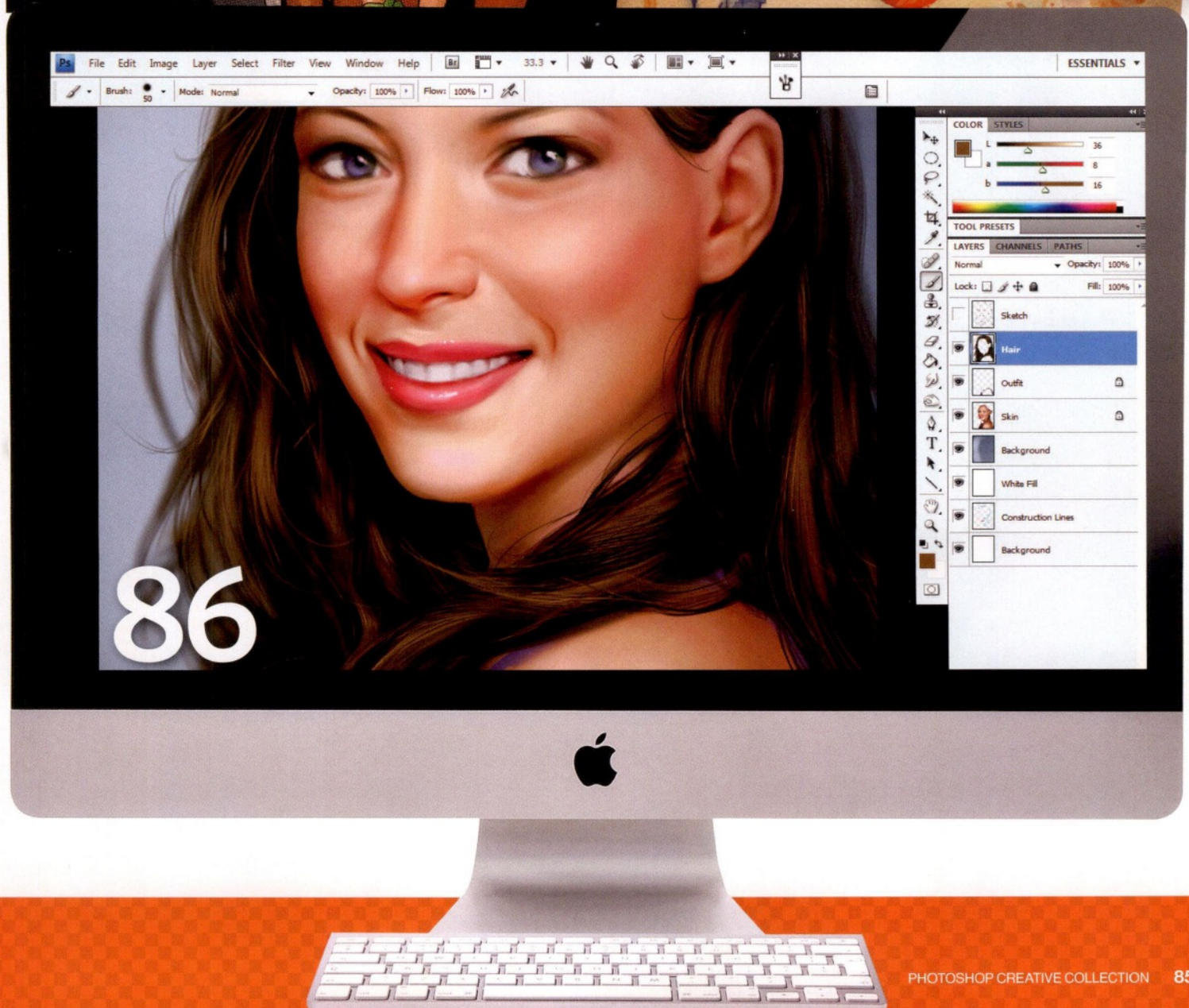


"No easel and no waiting for paint to dry"





The irises contain many different shades and colours
Slight variations in skin colour can bring life to your work
The silver earrings add a final touch and even more variation to the piece
Bring depth to the hair with the Dodge and Burn tools

Learn to paint

Learn the basics of portrait painting and how to re-create three traditional artistic methods using Photoshop's filters

Digital painting can be quite daunting when you haven't done it before. But really, it just takes a little practice, patience and imagination. It's all part of the process of learning Photoshop – after all we all have to start somewhere!

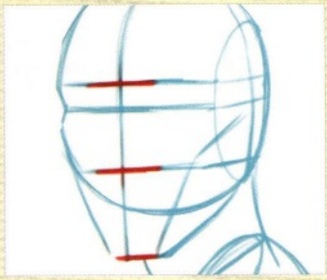
This is especially true for those of us that are just starting out on the incredible journey of digital painting, struggling with the learning curve, striving to create that first piece we can be proud of.

Well help has arrived! The basic process explained here is just the remedy you need. The following steps are easily adaptable for any project and can be built upon and applied to anyone's workflow – especially the beginner's.

We'll show you how to paint a complete portrait, starting from sketches and going all the way to the finished artwork. We'll also walk you through the steps of how to use photos to re-create the traditional painting styles of impasto, oil and watercolour – all in Photoshop. No easel, no waiting for paint to dry and no messy paint hands!

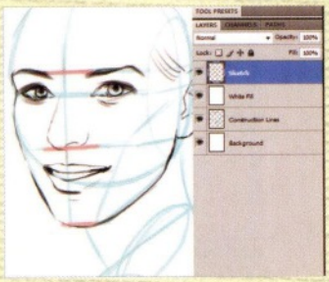
Sketching the face

Draw a sketch or download ours to skip this step!



Pre-sketch

01 Sketch a rough circle with your brush set to a pastel shade and a low opacity. Draw a cross with two lines, then draw another line for the brows just above the horizontal one and space the nose, chin and hairline equally.



Facial features

02 Decrease the layer opacity on these lines and begin drawing over them on a new layer with a brush set to black and 100% Opacity. Take a peek in a mirror to become familiar with the structure of facial features.

Finish the drawing

03 Concentrate on nailing the expression and mood you're after. All the lines will be eliminated later so don't fret too much about the messiness. You can turn off the visibility of the lines layer by clicking the eye icon.

Tablet vs mouse

There's certainly nothing wrong with using a mouse. In fact, many people are more comfortable with a mouse than a tablet, but the key difference is that tablets are pressure sensitive. There are many tools in Photoshop that have a Pen Pressure option, and it really comes in handy to produce more fluid strokes.

PEN PRESSURE
If you're using a graphics tablet, construction lines can be made subtle by going into the Brush palette and to Other Dynamics. Here, set Flow Control to Pen Pressure. In Photoshop CS6, this is found in the Options bar

FACE DIRECTION
By tilting the neck to a slight diagonal and drawing the jaw to one side, the model can be seen to be looking sideways over her shoulder. Features such as the mouth will also need to be slightly offset to one side

WORK EFFICIENTLY
Set your Foreground swatch to blue and your Background swatch to red. Then use the X key to switch between the two when drawing the initial construction lines

PASTEL COLOURS
To set the colour of your brush for the sketch, click on the Foreground swatch in the Toolbar and enter #c2e6ed for a pastel blue. For dividing up the facial features, use #e7acac for a pastel red

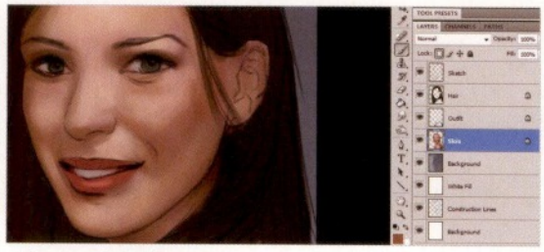
Paint skin and hair

Work the face and hair from flat colour to fabulous finish

Now we have the basic sketch it's time for some colour. Shading in some skin and brushing on some hair sounds complex and maybe a little intimidating, but the following steps will simplify the painting process and take a little complexity out of the equation. All you're doing is colouring in, except you're swapping pencils and paints for Photoshop. A great trick is to start with the larger shapes and slowly work in the smaller details as you progress. Take your time and remember, you can always undo!

Colour it

01 Make new layers for the skin, hair and background underneath the sketch layer, and paint in midtone colours using a brush at 100% Opacity. Choose colours that are related; the skin and hair have a touch of blue from the background.



Play with lights

02 Click Lock Transparency for the skin layer. The light source will be from the front, so apply shadows to appropriate areas. This will make the figure pop, and brushing in some slightly warmer highlights will amplify this effect too.

Pick and blend

03 To even up the skin, blend the colours. This can be easily done by colour picking and applying it with your brush in light strokes and the Smudge tool (R), set to an Airbrush Soft Round tip.

Liven things up

04 Add in more shadows and highlights according to the light source. Light pinks and oranges bring life to the cheeks and a tinge of light blue in the corners of the eye adds realism.

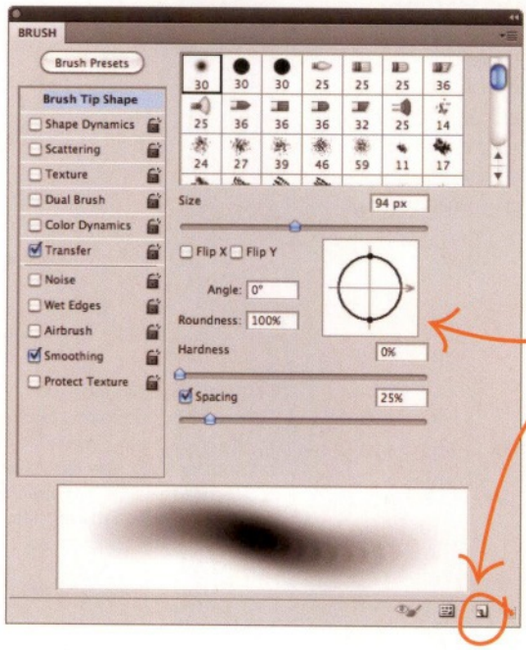
Expert tip

Choosing colours

Colour choice plays an important role in any medium and digital art is no exception to the rule. Luckily for us it's much easier to switch between hues or change your mind in a program like Photoshop than in the real world! Use the Color palette sliders to select colours quickly and easily. You can also customise which colour mode is displayed, such as RGB, HSB or LAB. LAB colour sliders are helpful when determining temperature (the B in LAB) and discerning colours that will complement your painting project easily. The HSB sliders make it easy to pump up the colour's saturation too (the S in HSB).

USING PRESETS
This simple brush is just a preset airbrush with a few alterations. Most importantly, the Hardness slider is set to 50% to accommodate hard and soft-edged elements in the image

"These steps will simplify the painting process... A great trick is to start with the larger shapes and slowly work in the smaller details"



SPACING AND SIZE
Set the Spacing as needed. Here it's at 21%, which gives a good balance of texture and, combined with the Transfer options, feels easy to use. The Diameter is set to 200px, but this will depend on the resolution of your document

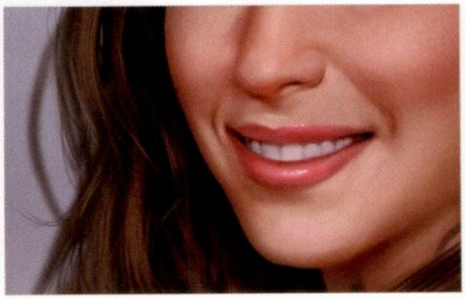
SAVING BRUSHES
Once you've created a unique brush tip, it can be saved using the Create New Brush button in the palette. The brush is saved into Brush Presets so you won't need to remember the settings

Shape up the hair

05 On the hair layer, sketch out the basic shape. Keep the locks simple, flowing and natural – don't worry about single strands just yet! With the light source in mind, add some paler and darker variations of the colour for volume until you are satisfied with the overall look.

Lock in volume

06 Start separating the locks into smaller sections and introduce more saturated colours, especially in the shadowed areas. Add volume with lighter highlights and darker colour in between to create depth. Overlap strands here and there, remembering that overlapped pieces will cast shadows.

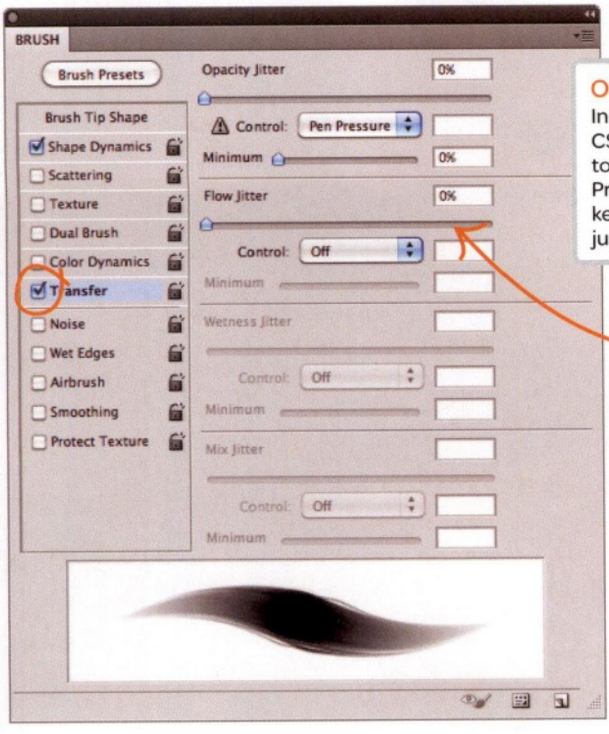


Strand work

07 Begin detailing thin strands within the locks with a small round brush, beginning at the parting and working downwards, and remember, even hair in beautiful condition will have fly-aways! Vary the stroke density by manually adjusting the Flow amount in the top Options bar.

Enhance the look

08 After detailing the strands, its time for some enhancement! Use the Smudge tool or Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur to blur out sections of hair we'd like to push further back, especially around the outside edges. Use the Burn tool (O) to darken parts in shadow and the Dodge (O again) for highlights.

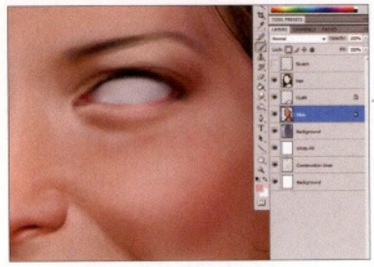


OPACITY AND FLOW

In Transfer (Other Dynamics for early CS versions), the Opacity Control is set to Off and Flow Control is set to Pen Pressure. This setting will help you to keep your brushstrokes soft and fluid, just like in the sketch

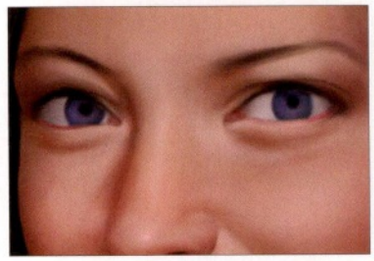
"The Opacity Control... will help you to keep your brushstrokes soft and fluid, just like in the sketch"

Paint the eyes



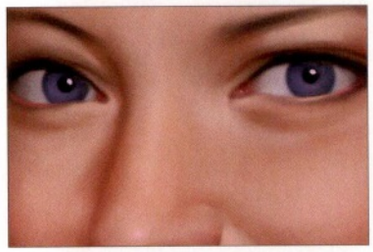
SHAPE THE EYEBALLS

Eyeballs are round, so to convey that in our painting, we'll colour it in with a greyish pink and add shading in the corners. Shape the lower eyelid with a pink flesh tone along the inner edge.



ADD THE IRISES

Draw the irises by dotting with a large brush at 100% Opacity. Paint in darker edges and then soften with the Blur tool (R). The eyes would be receiving quite a lot of light, so, using an almost black brush, paint in small pupils.



MAKE-UP THE DIFFERENCE

We're going to give her some smoky make-up, so go around the upper and lower lids lightly with a charcoal colour. Add in a white-lavender speck for the reflection in the centre of the iris.

FINISH THE DETAILS

With a very small brush, paint some radiating lines and dots in the iris with various colours. For the lashes, start at the lid and work outwards, using curved strokes to keep them realistic.

PAINT FROM PHOTOS
Impasto
Start photo
Oil paint
Watercolour

Impasto painting style

Re-create this traditional effect quickly and easily with a few tricks and filters

Impasto is a painting technique where paint is set on the canvas very thickly, so that the brush or palette-knife strokes are easily visible. The thickness and impact of the impasto style gives the paintings a unique and expressive three-dimensional presence. Oil paints are most commonly used for impasto, but the style is not lost for non-oil users, as it can be mimicked with many traditional mediums. Of course, we'll be discovering the benefits of using non-traditional methods, as we can do it with Photoshop!

Organise colours

01 First, we'll need to simplify the details a bit. Start by blurring the colours with Filter>Blur>Smart Blur. Using the preview pane, adjust the Radius and Threshold sliders to 22 to eliminate the photo's crispness and bring out areas of colour.

Thicken the foreground

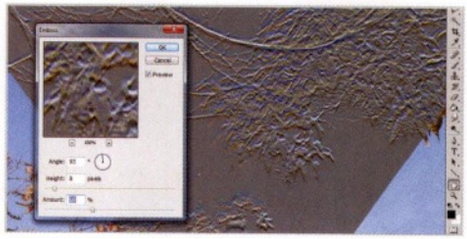
02 Now make the paint appear thicker by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer and use Filter>Stylize>Emboss. Adjust the Height to 6px and Amount to 100%. Set this layer to Overlay mode and alter the layer opacity if necessary.

Add some texture

03 Create a new layer and, using a textured tip (try the Scattered Dry Brush from the Wet Media Brushes set), paint around the limbs and leaves. Apply the Bevel & Emboss layer style to make it look raised and reduce the layer's Fill to 0%.

Pump the thickness

04 Create a new layer and apply the same Bevel & Emboss style. Brush over the areas you want to be more prominent, such as the limbs, leaves and the roof of the building. You can repeat this process to gradually build up the effect.



Emboss time

05 Merge all of the layers below in the stack with Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E. Use the Emboss filter as you did in step 2 and then readjust the sliders as necessary until you are happy with the look of the raised areas on the preview.

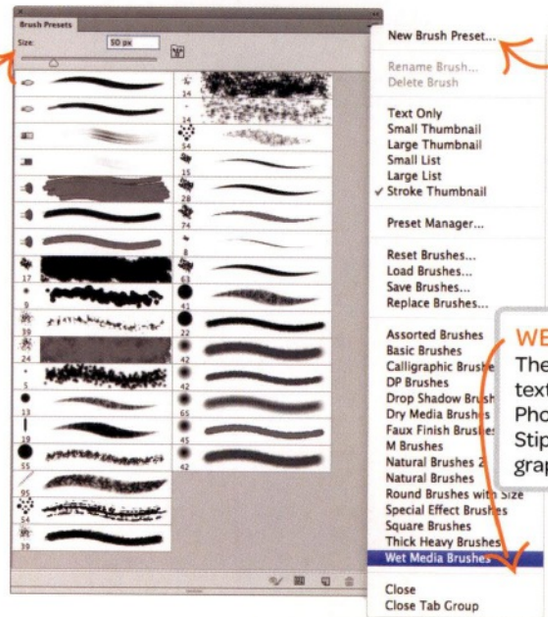
Complete with sandstone

06 Make another new merged layer. Go to Filter>Texture>Texturizer and choose Sandstone from the drop-down menu. Set Scaling to 180% and Relief to 10, and adjust until you've found a satisfactory result in the preview window. Now apply it.

Brush presets

ADJUST SIZE
Because these are all preset brushes, each one has a set Size. This size can be altered using the slider at the top of the palette, but you'll find that the larger you go the more distorted they will become

PREVIEW SIZE
The size of each tip in the palette can be changed with options such as Small Thumbnail, Large List or Stroke Thumbnail. Use Text Only or one of the List options to reveal what each brush is called



BRUSH TYPES
The Brush Presets palette can be loaded from the Window menu or from inside the Brushes palette in earlier CS versions. The presets contain some dynamic brush tips set up for you. Click on the arrow in the top right to open up all types

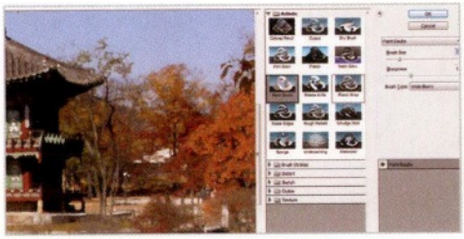
WET MEDIA BRUSHES
The Wet Media Brushes have a lot of texture quality that suits painting in Photoshop. Combine tips such as Heavy Stipple or Large Texture Stroke with a graphics tablet for realistic effects

Oil painting made easy

Transform an ordinary photo into an oil-painted wonder

The elegance and sophisticated beauty of oil painting has been around for many centuries. This style is well known for its slow drying, painterly brushstrokes, ease of colour mixing and canvas texture. Paintbrushes, palette knives and rags were popular application tools.

Traditional oils took up to three weeks to dry, while nowadays some oil paints dry in less than three days. However, with the advent of hardware technology, tablets and awesome software, re-creating this style using our digital tools is a snap.



Simplify the photo

01 Let's begin by duplicating the original photo layer with the shortcut Cmd/Ctrl+J. This will keep the original intact just in case we need it. Run Filter>Artistic>Paint Daubs and set Brush Size to 9, Sharpness to 12 and Brush Type to Wide Blurry.

Smudge away

02 Grab the Smudge tool and select the Oil Medium to Large Tip brush from Wet Media Brushes. Make a new layer, and check Sample All Layers in the Options bar. Begin smudging in random strokes while keeping the general colours together.

Paint manually

03 Sometimes you may want to put colour back that you smudged out. Use the Brush tool to manually paint some colour back in, sampling hue with Opt/Alt as you go. Experiment with different brushes, and repeat this until you're satisfied.

Set up relief

04 Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E. Make sure that the colour swatches are black and white, then visit Filter>Sketch>Bas Relief. Change the Light option and the Detail and Smoothness sliders if needed so that the foreground jumps slightly forward.

Bevel and Emboss

05 In the Channels palette, click Load Selection and return to the Layers palette. Hit the Backspace key to remove the selected areas and set the blend mode to Overlay. Apply a Bevel and Emboss layer style and adjust the Fill slider accordingly.

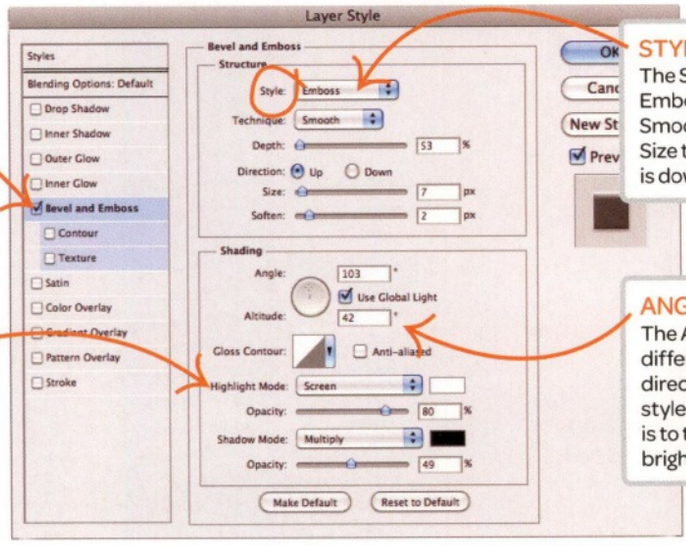
Finish with texture

06 As a finishing touch, fill a new layer with a pattern of your choice (Layer> New Fill Layer>Pattern). You can experiment with these, but we went with the Burlap preset. Lower the layer's Opacity down to 50% and set its mode to Soft Light.

Layer styles

BEVEL AND EMBOSS
Layer styles are applied either from the Layers palette or by double-clicking on a layer thumbnail. Bevel and Emboss focuses on the edges of the strokes, making them appear 3D

HIGHLIGHT AND SHADOW
Set Highlight Mode to 80% Opacity and Shadow Mode to 50% Opacity. This alters the lighting so lower the Opacity of the Shadow Mode to 0% to reduce distortion



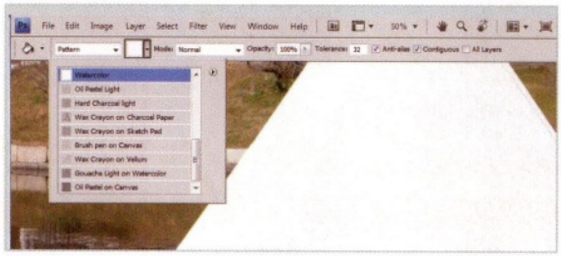
STYLE
The Style option used here was Emboss, with Technique set to Smooth. Change Depth to 50%, Size to 7px and Soften to 2px. This is down to personal preference

ANGLE
The Angle option makes all the difference, as this changes the direction and intensity of the layer style. The closer the crosshair is to the middle of the circle, the brighter the effect

Watercolour painting

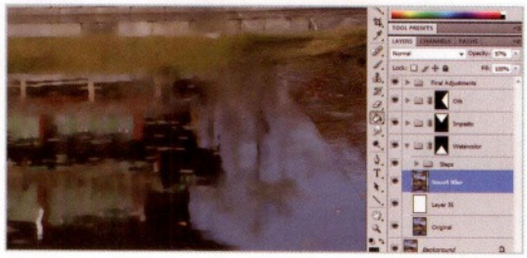
An effortless technique to capture this timeless style

Watercolour painting requires a particularly delicate technique. Learning to anticipate and take advantage of the medium is an important factor. The transparency of the paint is a unique trait, as are its colour-mixing and layering capabilities. Watercolour is most often applied to light-coloured surfaces, allowing the layers and tones to overlap, creating the depth the style is known for.



Prep the backdrop

01 Watercolours are usually painted on light surfaces, so select the Paint Bucket tool (G) and choose Pattern in the drop-down. Choose Artist Surfaces and select the Watercolour pattern. Fill on a new layer, duplicate this and then hide one.



Water the water

02 Duplicate the photo layer and drag it above the pattern. Use the Smart Blur filter to smooth out the details for a watery look. Set up a mask for this layer by clicking the Add Layer Mask icon and fill with solid black (press Cmd/Ctrl+I).

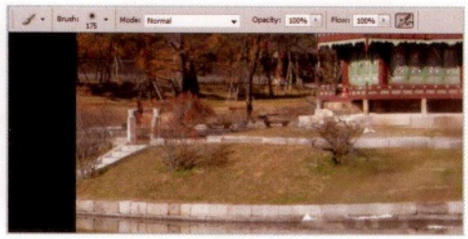
Expert tip

Use your layers

Layers are a handy thing and can be used in many different ways to make painting easier and to speed up workflow. For instance, Lock Transparency can be used to protect transparent areas. Layers can also be used as a backup in case you decide to revert back to an earlier painting stage by duplicating (Cmd/Ctrl+J). You can also stack elements on separate layers for more control and flexibility.

Watercolour wash

03 Click on the mask to make it active. Choose the Watercolor Textured Surface brush from Wet Media Brushes and adjust the Flow to a low amount of around 5%. Begin brushing over the mask in a white colour, revealing the layer as a wash.



Enhance the colour

04 After completing the washing effect, duplicate this layer and set its layer mode to Multiply. Adjust the layer's opacity to a lower value, just enough to create deeper, more concentrated colours, while still maintaining the washed look you made.

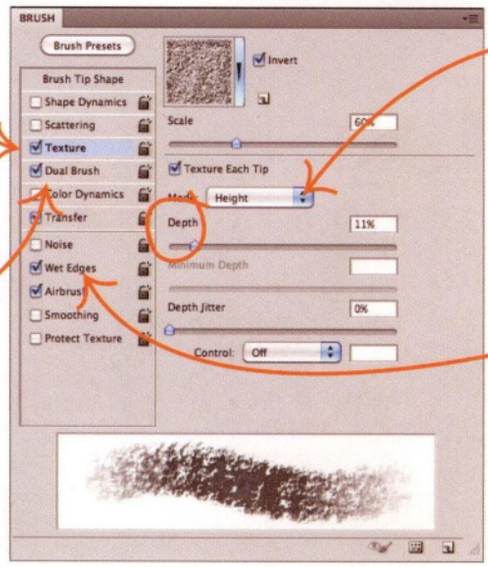
Introduce final effects

05 Duplicate this layer and delete its mask. Use the Glowing Edges filter and adjust the sliders for bright lines. Desaturate (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U) and invert (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Turn on the extra layer from step 1, move it to the top and set to Multiply.

Watercolour brush

TEXTURE EACH TIP
Check this box for more texture in each brushstroke when applying paint over the image

DUAL BRUSH
With the Dual Brush option active in the palette, you can try out different brush tips to enhance the Watercolor Textured Surface tip for greater depth



MODE AND DEPTH
Set the Mode to Height and move the Depth and Minimum Depth sliders down so that more detail is seen in the Preview Stroke window. This is another way to boost texture when adapting this brush

WET EDGES
The Wet Edges option in the Brush palette adds a thin outline to the brushstrokes that helps give the paint effect realism, as if painted with wet bristles

Before

Paint a portrait

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to use scanned paint marks to create a stylised image with the Transform and Healing Brush Tool features

Time taken

3.5 hours

Transform your photographs by mixing traditional and digital mediums in this creative Photoshop tutorial

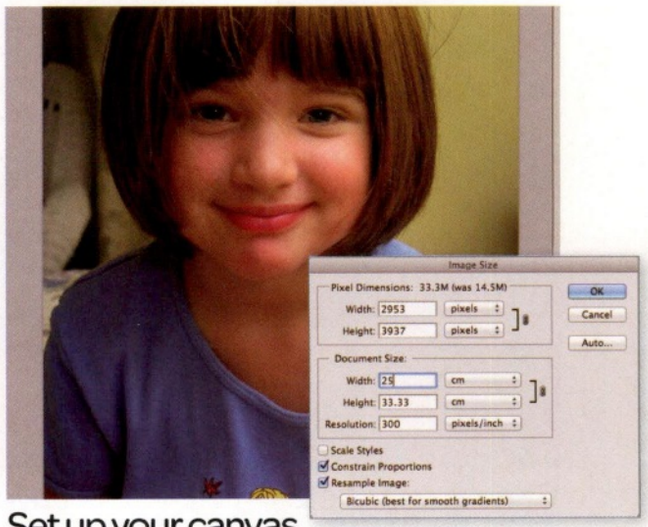
Digital programs like Photoshop give us a lot of creative freedom but every now and then it is nice to remember the good old traditional mediums and techniques. In this tutorial we will start off by creating some painted textures then transfer these into Photoshop by scanning, which is where the genius takes place!

Photoshop's Layers palette and blend mode options play a huge role in this project, enabling us to join our scanned elements together to create a final image that just wouldn't have been possible without a lot more time being spent on it (waiting around for areas to dry) and a considerable amount of mess being made.

So dust off those paints and get a start photo ready or, alternatively, load all of the starting files that are provided on the resource disc. We've provided a range of paint marks and the portrait.

Make some mess

01 To begin with we need to make a wide variety of different marks to scan in. We have used a range of brushes, palette knives and sponges to get some good splodges. Keep them varied and ensure you pick complementary colours as we won't be altering these in Photoshop.



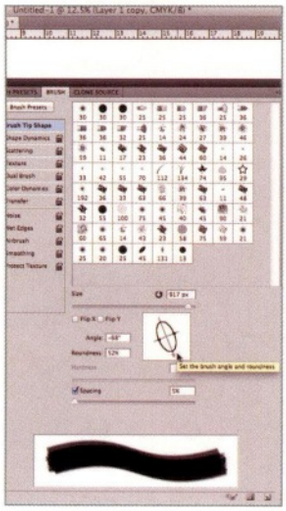
Set up your canvas

02 While you are waiting for the paint to dry (or whenever you're ready!), open the start photo provided on your free disc. Double-click on the Background in the Layers palette so that it is unlocked and editable. Increase the image size so that it will be high resolution using Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+I, making sure Constrain Proportions is checked.

Expert tip

Photoshop mark making

Go to Window>Brush and in this palette select your desired brush tip. In our case that was the Oil Medium Wet Flow. Alter the Angle in the brush tip shape section by rotating the small icon and continue to work through the options. Set whether you're working with a mouse or tablet, as the opacity and flow will alter to simulate pressure accordingly. You can tweak the brush mark's edges depending on whether you want a soft watercolour edge or a solid line.



Scan the splodges

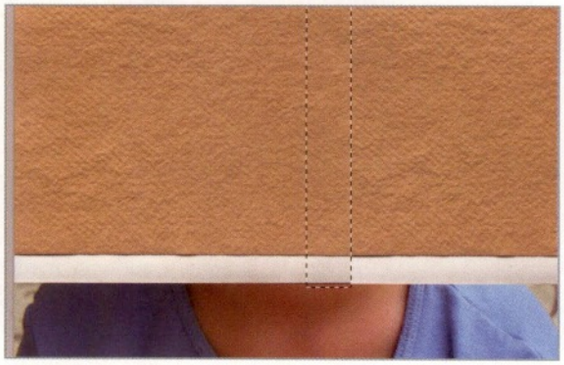
03 Scan in your paint marks and open up Photoshop, however, if you do not have a scanner then do not fear as all of the paint marks used in this example are provided on the free disc.

Perfect size

04 Resize your start photo if needed so that it is positioned within the canvas ready to be transformed. To do this press Ctrl/Cmd+T to activate Transform, holding down Shift to keep perspective. Drag a corner pointer to increase or decrease size and hit Enter when happy.

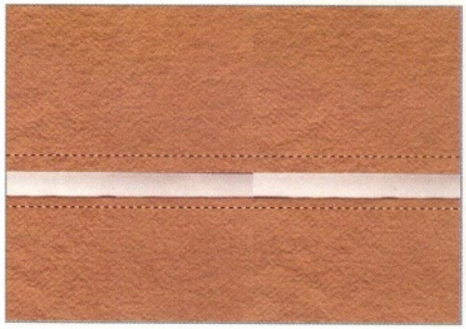
Paper textures

05 Also provided on the disc is the textured paper that is used in the background. Open this up and simply drag and drop into your new canvas. Position it in the top left of the canvas. Go to the Layers palette, click onto the paper layer to highlight and press Ctrl/Cmd+J to duplicate.



Build up the background

06 With the Move tool selected, position this duplicated layer in the top-right corner. Swap to the Rectangular Marquee tool, draw down the side of the duplicated layer to select the white paper edge and hit Backspace to trim then nudge this layer so it sits alongside the other paper layer.



Canvas complete

07 Shift-click both paper layers in the Layers palette and press Ctrl/Cmd+E to merge. Press Ctrl/Cmd+J to duplicate this layer then go to Edit> Transform>Flip Vertical. With the Move tool, position this new layer at the bottom of the canvas and use the Rectangular Marquee to trim the unwanted edge.

Layer order

08 Merge the two paper layers and select the Healing Brush Tool from the Toolbar. Alt/Opt-click onto the paper texture and paint over any joins. This tool will blend the two sets of pixels together hiding any unsightly lines. In the Layers palette, move this paper layer so it sits underneath the photo.

Blend mode choice

09 Click onto the photo layer in the Layers palette and select Pin Light from the blend mode drop-down. Add a mask to the photo layer by pressing the icon at the base of the palette.

Mask excess detail

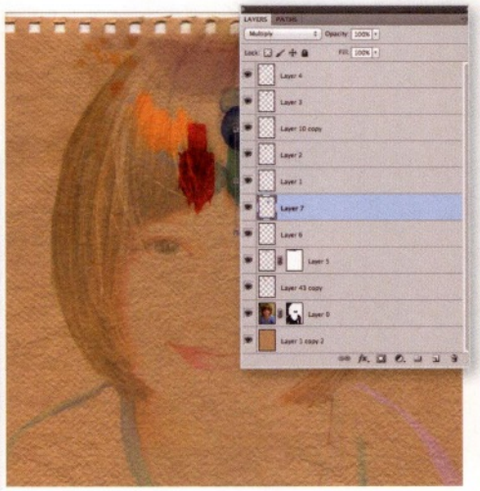
10 Select the Brush tool, set to medium size with a hard edge and make sure the Foreground and Background colours in the Toolbar are black and white respectively. Click onto the mask icon in the Layers palette then paint onto the main canvas area masking all excess details, leaving only the key facial elements and hair behind.

Transfer the paint

11 Select the Lasso tool and, working on your first paint splat scan, draw around an area ending where you started to create an active selection. Swap to the Move tool then drag and drop the selected area onto your new canvas.

Position in place

12 Set this paint splat layer's blend mode in the Layers palette to Multiply. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T to activate Transform and then position in place. To rotate the layer, hover over the corner pointers and, if resizing, hold Shift to keep perspective.

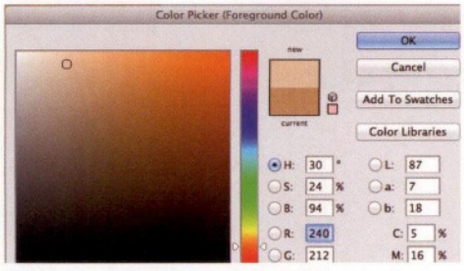


Creative placement

13 Repeat steps 11 and 12, building up the paint layers, positioning and resizing to suit. Try to pick paint splats that suit the area you are placing them into, for example jagged-edged splats match the fringe area while circular blobs can fill the body of hair.

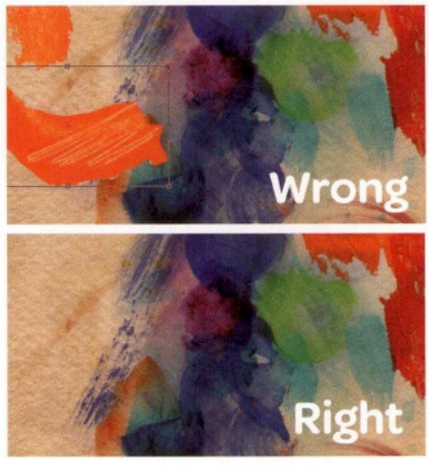
Layer scanned elements

14 As your image takes shape, lower the photo's opacity in the Layers palette so that you can see your paint-splat colours more clearly. Select the Eyedropper tool and Alt/Opt-click on the paper texture to sample the colour.



Set up the Brush tool

15 Click on the Foreground colour swatch and pick a lighter version of the sample colour currently being displayed. Select the Brush tool and, in the top Options bar, lower the Opacity to 20%, pick a large soft-edged brush and set to Overlay. Click onto the paper texture in the Layers palette.



What can go wrong

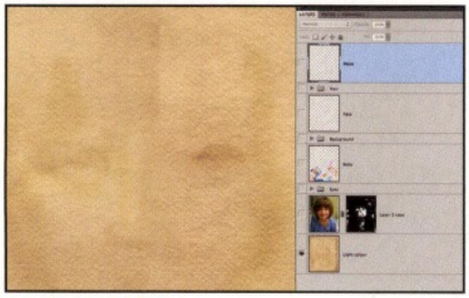
Selection and blend mode choices

We have used the Lasso tool to quickly select around a paint blob then drag and drop it into our canvas. The Multiply blend mode is applied then the Eraser tool used to tidy up any messy edges. A quick and efficient way to work on a multi-layered file.

If you opted to use the Magic Wand or Pen tool to cut out each paint blob before dropping into your canvas you would lose all of the lovely brush edges and the layers would not blend as well together. Your colours would be bolder if a Multiply effect wasn't applied but at the expense of the textured end result.

Finish off your image

Add these extra effects to your image at the end to really finish it off and make the project look complete. Getting the layout and facial features spot on is essential, but if you don't push your image to the next level you will always feel that it is lacking that certain something that transforms it from a nice piece to a magnificent piece of digital art. That certain something in this project is the use of the Dodge and Burn tools plus a little extra detail in the surrounding areas to the face. So read on and incorporate our advice once you have reached the end of the steps.

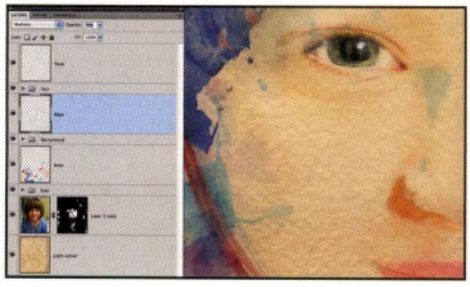


Dodge and Burn

Use these tools at a low exposure with a soft-edged brush to add depth into your image. Working on the paper texture layer, add shadows with the Burn tool to the edge of the canvas then around the edge of the face. Highlights are added with the Dodge tool to the cheeks and nose.

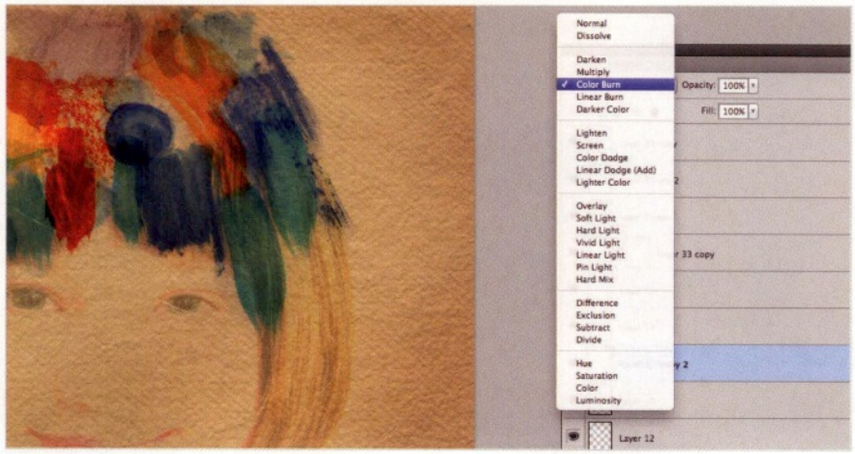
Scatter effect

To add to the painted effect we have placed some more elements to the surrounding facial area. We have added a mix of soft watercolour and thick splats that we have duplicated and set the blend modes to Color Burn or Linear Burn.



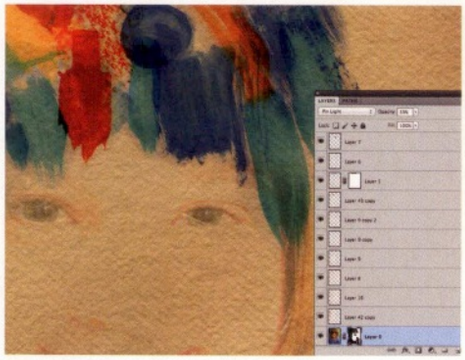
Highlight the structure

We have used some more paint scans that are a bit softer to add facial highlights where the cheekbones would be. Lowering the opacity means that the effect is soft and subtle but helps to add structure to the face.



Brighter, bolder colours

16 Paint onto the paper layer, adding lighter tones under your paint blobs so that the colours show through more brightly. Continue to build up the hair and body with paint layers set to Multiply, but also try the Color Burn and Linear Burn options as these can work well.



Duplicate layers

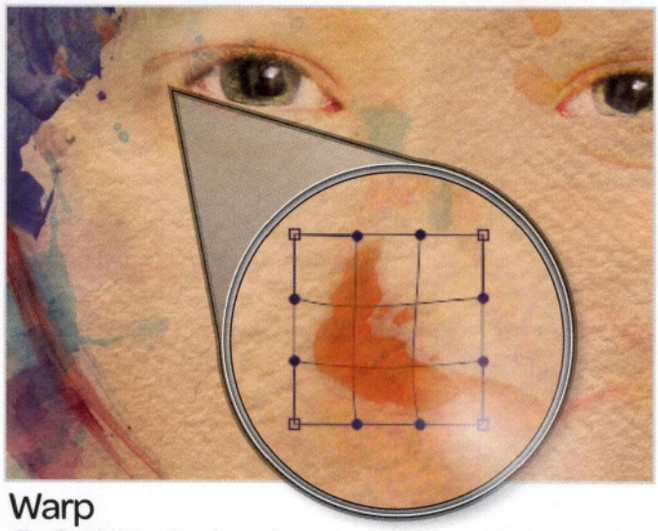
17 To make some areas of paint seem thicker, simply duplicate the layer. Try to achieve a good variety of watercolour wash and thick oil blobs. When the hair is built up mask away any real strands from the photo layer that may still be showing.

Eye development

18 The eyes are key so this is why we are leaving some of the original photo showing. Working on the photo layer's mask, make sure the eyes are visible. We have kept the photo layer at 50% Opacity to retain the soft effect, but keep it visible.

Facial features

19 If you want to add some painted elements to the eyes then do so, but we are leaving ours natural along with the lips for a visual contrast. We are, however, adding some shapes to mould the nose. Pick the shapes to suit, or if you need help you can use the Warp tool.

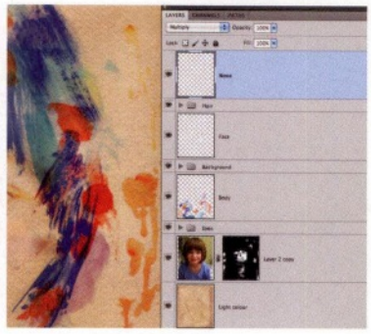


Warp

20 Click on the shape layer you wish to warp in the Layers palette then go to Edit>Transform>Warp. A mesh will appear over your shape enabling you to click on the inner lines to pull and bend parts of it.

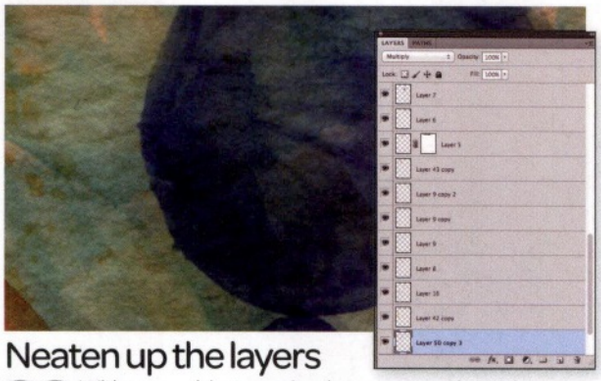
Less is more

21 The nose only requires highlight shapes and the key with pieces like this is to not overwork them; less is sometimes more. Keep adding elements and zooming out to check your progress, turning off layers by pressing the eye icon to check on the composition.



Group to tidy

22 With so many paint splats we must tidy up the Layers palette to make working quicker and easier. To do this, Shift-click layers in the Layers palette that come from similar areas on your canvas and press Ctrl/Cmd+G to group them. Double-click on the group title and rename.



Neaten up the layers

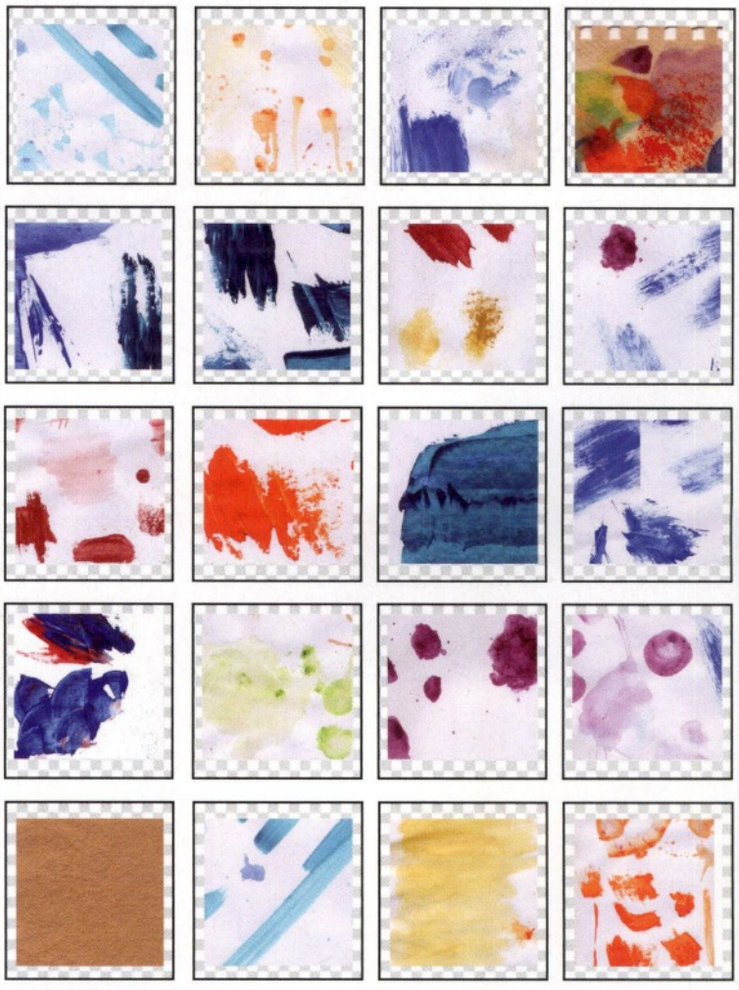
23 With everything now in place we need to tidy up the paint splat edges. Due to the shapes being quickly selected then dropped onto the canvas, some of their backgrounds may be visible on the paper texture, but this is easily fixed.

Blend them together

24 Select the Eraser tool and set it to a small, soft-edged brush at 60% Opacity. Zoom in close then just paint away the unwanted edges. While you're working around the image, erase any solid edges so that all the shapes blend well together.

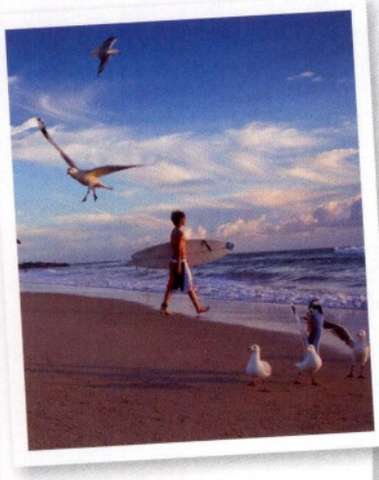
Marks that made this image

Check your free disc for all of the scanned files we used



There are five preset tips in the Thick Heavy Brushes category of Photoshop. They are Flat Bristle, Round Bristle, Smoother Round Bristle and Rough Round Bristle

Before



Control your brushes

Explore the Thick Heavy Brushes for painterly images

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

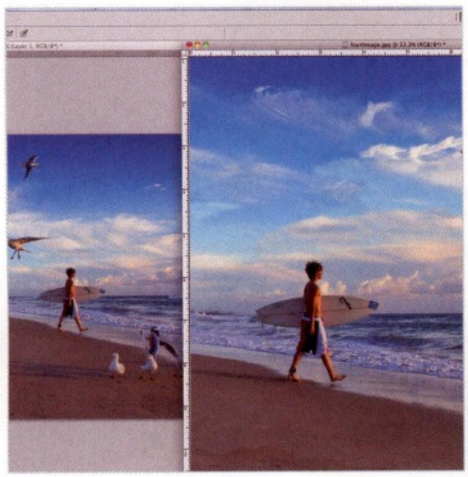
Use the Thick Heavy Brushes set to transform a photo with some clever layer techniques

Time taken

2 hours

We are going to start our particular image with a beautiful beach scene taken by Nick Lagos, an amazing seascape photographer based in Brisbane, Australia (Google him to see more of his work). First we will change the image from landscape to portrait mode to really focus on the boy in the image and give it a story.

If you have never painted with the Thick Heavy Brushes before, this may be out of your comfort zone but we urge you to be brave and try this lesson out; you will be amazed how easily it comes together and creates a wonderful painted look! We used the Smooth Round Bristle brush throughout, but feel free to experiment with the entire range.



Composition

01 Before you can make a beautiful painting you need a great composition. We want to make this landscape vertical, which will require some cropping of the image, and we also need to make changes to the content. We used the Crop tool to change the orientation and the Clone tool to rearrange the elements. This makes the image more focused on the subject.

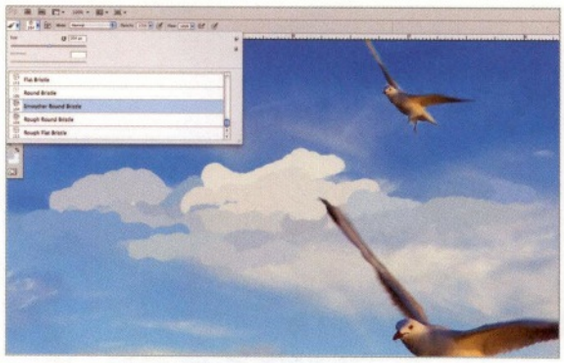
Load the brushes

02 If you cannot see the Thick Heavy Brushes, then you will need to load them. Click on the Brush tool and then in the upper-left area of your menu bar you will see a drop-down option that will reveal your brushes. There is a tiny arrow in the upper-right corner, which you can click on to append any brushes you want to add.

Expert tip

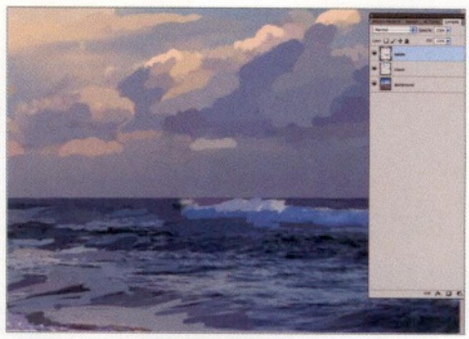
Paint tricks in CS6

Photoshop CS6 has a couple of cunning tricks to take your art to another level. First of all, you can increase your brush size to 5000 pixels. This is great for blocking in backgrounds in one swoop. You can also make use of the Brightness/Contrast slider for brushes to apply texture when painting. This can negate the need to dabble with the Texturizer filter and helps give a touch of realism.



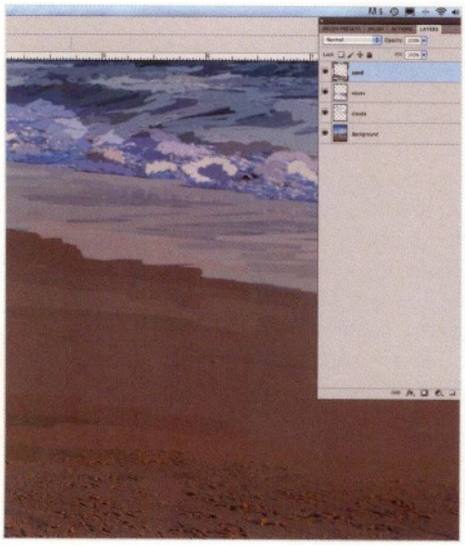
Start painting

03 Make a new transparent layer and name it Clouds (do this for every step). Select the Smooth Round Bristle brush and start painting in the cloud shapes at 100% Opacity, using Alt/Opt to change colours. Paint all the clouds in the image.



Make some waves

04 Using the same brush as before, make a new layer called Waves and keep painting. Sample every variation of colour to achieve the most natural look. This takes time, so go slowly for accuracy. Extend this into the shore lap area.

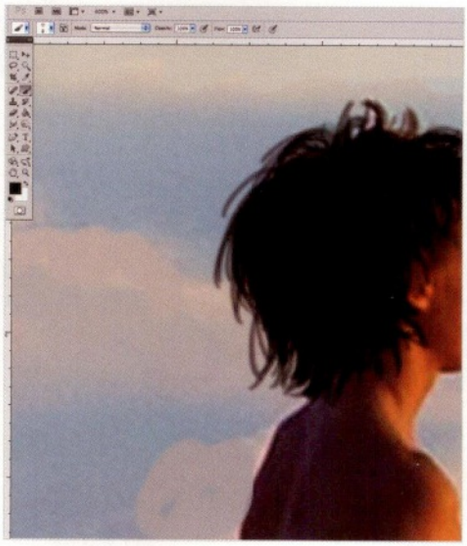


Sand painting

05 Let's stay with the same brush, as it is looking good. Make a layer for the sand and use sweeping brushstrokes back and forth to create a smooth, sandy surface. Keep sampling those colours using Alt/Opt.

Flying high

06 Keep following the same direction as before, zooming in really close to the seagulls, painting in the shadows, highlights and all the details, such as the eyes and beak. Keep using the Alt/Opt key to sample colours and your left square bracket key to reduce brush size for the small areas.



Hair detail

07 Make a layer for the hair and, using the same techniques as before, take some liberties and paint his hair a bit messier and longer by extending the brushstrokes beyond his current hair lines.

Paint the skin

08 Painting skin can be tricky, but not impossible if you have the colours there to sample. Zoom in and sample the shadows behind the arms and the highlights that show the sun on the skin. If you miss these steps the skin will look flat, so take your time. Drag the skin layer beneath the hair.

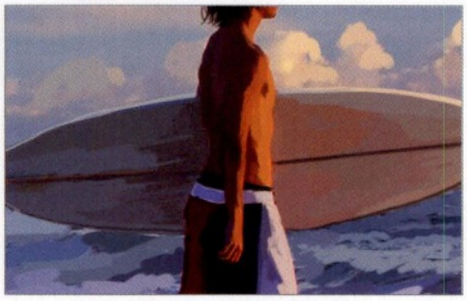
Outfit experiments

09 Make a layer for the swimsuit and, once again, feel free to be creative; you can change the colour of the suit if you want to. The pockets can be painted over if you do not want to take the time to include them. At this stage start experimenting.

Expert tip

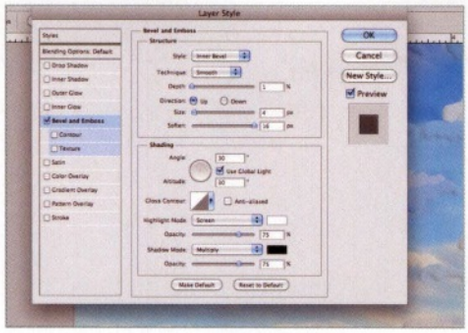
Canvas treatment

Once your image is complete, give it a beautiful, realistic canvas look by going to Filter>Texture>Texturizer and choose the canvas texture using the selections that you feel look the best for your painting. Adjust the depth and scale to even out all the layer effects and give a more professional look to your painting.



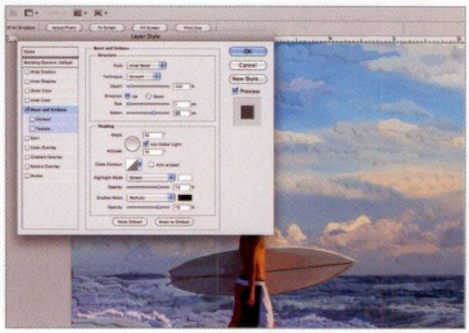
Simplify the surfboard

10 Now that you are getting the hang of it, let's paint the surfboard. Don't worry about the logo or other details of the board, just paint over them and keep the lines smooth and slick, but pay attention to the shadows near the body and the bright lines on top where the sun is hitting.



Fatten up the clouds

11 Now we create the illusion of heavier brushstrokes using layer effects. Select the cloud layer, click on your Layer Effects menu at the bottom and select Bevel and Emboss with Depth 1, Size 4 and Soften 16. Play around until you get a style you like.

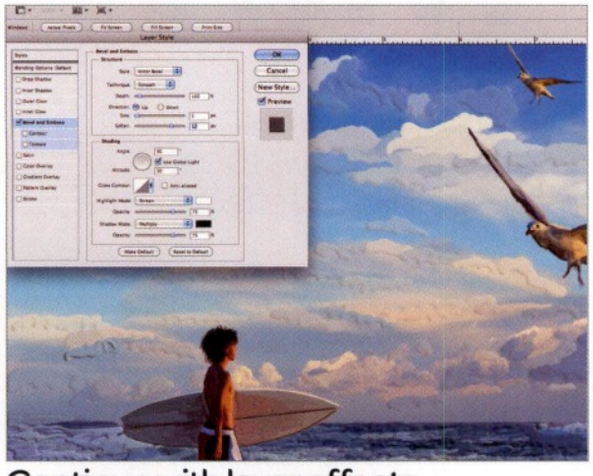


Make the waves stand out

12 Use the same technique as the clouds but ramp up the Depth and reduce the Soften amount. Do you see where each part of the image will require a different treatment in the effects depending on its texture and structure?

Resize and repeat

13 Using the effects menu, select the same option as previously, but this time click the Texture box and select the option that you think will look best for the sand. We chose Burlap. You can load more textures if you do not see one you like.



Continue with layer effects

14 Continue to add layer effects to the rest of the elements in the image. Notice that you will probably want to keep these soft on the skin and seagulls to keep them from being too prominent.

How this image has been made

We look at the layers that build up to make this design

BACKGROUND
This is the beginning layer or starting image on top of which we will build all the layers as a guide.

CLOUDS
This is a transparent layer where we have painted the clouds and applied Bevel and Emboss.

WAVES
This is a transparent layer in which we painted the waves and applied a layer effect.

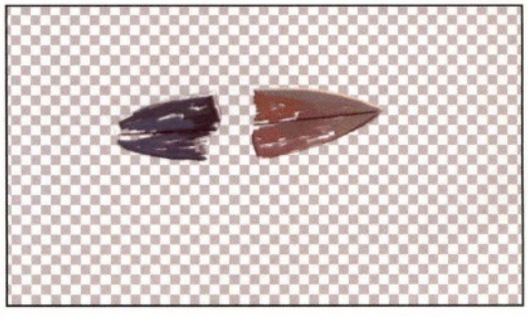
SAND
On this transparent layer we painted the sand and applied a layer style and the Burlap texture.

SEAGULLS
We painted the seagulls on a transparent layer and added a bevel effect to enhance the strokes.

SKIN
We painted the skin on a transparent layer and added a deliberately soft bevel effect.

HAIR
We painted the hair again on a transparent layer and added a bevel to bring out the strokes.

SWIMSUIT
When working on the swimsuit's transparent layer, we painted over the pockets for a smoother look.



SURFBOARD
As with previous layers, we worked on a transparent backing, isolating the surfboard area. We painted over the logo and ensured that the sunlight and shadows remained intact.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use Custom Shapes, brushes and Outer Glows to create a scene filled with magical shapes

Time taken

1 hour

Paint with light

Use a combination of paths, brush strokes and outer glows to easily create magical lighting effects

It's time to play with colour and light! A little girl will be our star, using her magic paint brush to craft luminous shapes out of thin air.

To start creating these light forms, we'll use the Custom Shape tool to form vector paths. We'll then stroke these with specified brush settings.

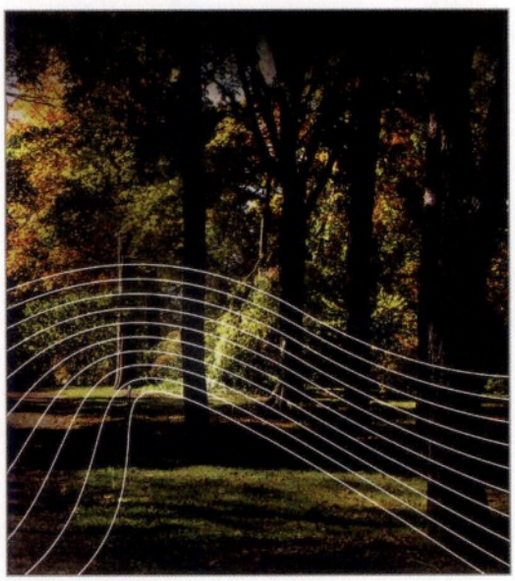
Elements users: you'll be dragging out a shape onto a new layer, Cmd/Ctrl+clicking the layer to select it, create a new one then hitting Edit>Stroke. After that, you'll deselect then delete the shape.

Once the shapes are created and stroked, we'll use Outer Glow layer styles to make them come to vivid life. To reinforce the shaky nature of the girl's light art, we'll duplicate and offset the shapes. We'll also add several streaks to suggest doodles and preparatory sketches. To keep consistent with the radiant nature of the composition, these will also be adorned with Outer Glows.

We'll sprinkle some pizzazz with a stars brush, then add bright glares made with the Gradient tool. To finalise the piece, we'll then add in an array of Adjustment and Fill layers combined with blend modes. These will tweak the overall colouring, creating the perfect, magical vibe.

Paint with light

PHOTOSHOP CS4 AND ABOVE & ELEMENTS 11 | **WORKS WITH**



Wavy lines

01 Open 'Start.psd'. This shadow-strewn scene is a perfect place for a magical light show. Go to File>Place and add 'Lines.ai'. Apply a yellow Outer Glow style to the Lines layer, with Opacity at 50%, Spread at 4% and Size at 46px.

Subtle lines

02 Drop the layer's Opacity to 55%. Add a layer mask using the icon at the bottom of the layer's palette. Use a large, soft brush (B) at 100% Opacity to remove the left area. Use lower opacities to gradually soften the remaining lines.

Expert tip

Editing paths

Need to adjust a path created with the Custom Shape tool? Use the Path Selection tool to select or move the entire path. The Direct Selection tool allows you to edit individual anchor points and path segments. The Add Anchor Point tool and Delete Anchor Point tool are self-explanatory, and the Convert Point tool allows you to turn corner points into smooth points and vice-versa. Save the customised path in the Paths palette by naming it.

Sneaky lines

03 Use the Lasso tool (L) to select a portion of a tree where the lines cross it. Go to Select>Modify>Feather and choose 3 pixels. Fill with black in the mask to hide and then use a small brush to fine-tune if needed. Repeat for another tree.

Radial gradients

04 Create two or three gradients on separate layers to start the girl's backdrop. Set the Gradient tool (G) to the Radial style and 100% Opacity, and choose colours such as #C6003F and #C7A000.

Add girl

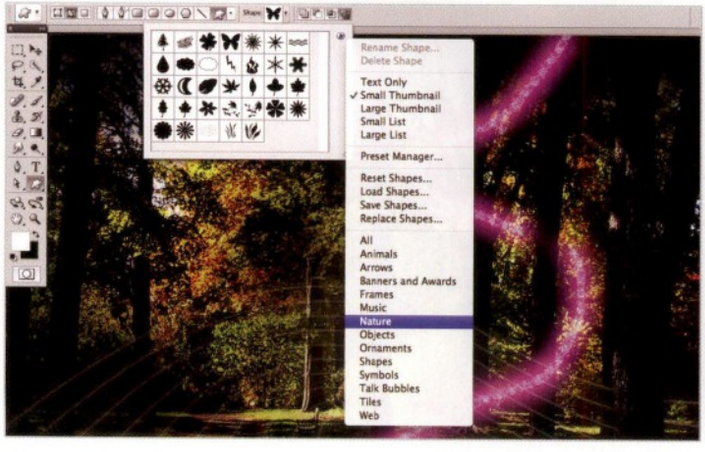
05 Go to File>Place, add 'Lola.png', scale it down and add a 7px Gaussian Blur. Then use a soft, black brush at 60% Opacity on the Smart Filter mask to restore detail. Don't have CS4+? Duplicate the layer, apply a Gaussian Blur and erase unneeded areas.

Light streak

06 Create a new layer and apply an Outer Glow. Use #DF58BA for the glow's colour. Set Opacity to 75%, Spread to 10% and Size to 111px. Set a white foreground colour, then use the Brush tool (at 100% Opacity) and a preset (like Chalk) to paint.

More streaks

07 Add more layers and apply Outer Glows before painting on them with various brush presets. Play with the Outer Glow Spread, Size, and colour (try #0FCEB1). Use descriptive layer names like 'Dry Brush' or 'Scribble' so you know what's on each one.



Custom shapes

08 Select the Custom Shape tool (U). In the Options bar, click on the Custom Shape Picker drop-down and load the Nature category via the fly-out menu. Choose the Butterfly shape.

Create path

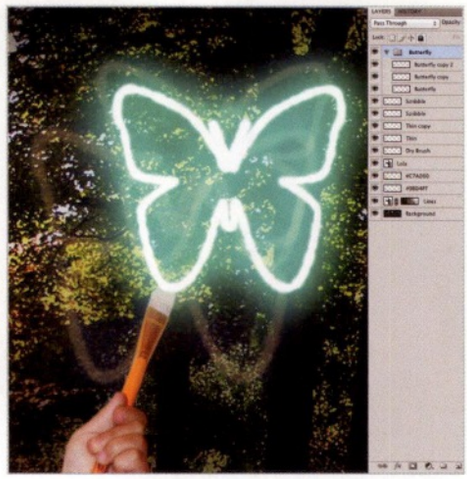
09 Make sure Paths is selected in the top left of the Options bar. Create a new group named Butterfly, then create a layer inside named Butterfly. Click and drag to create the path (hold down Shift to keep the shape in proportion when you do this).

Load Light brush

10 Set the foreground colour to white, the Brush tool to 100% Opacity and load 'Light.abr' from the Brush palette's fly-out menu. We'll use this to stroke our paths.

Stroke path

11 In the Paths palette's fly-out menu, choose Stroke Path. Set Tool to Brush and untick Simulate Pressure. Click OK. Now apply an Outer Glow, using #0FCEB1 as the glow's colour. Set Opacity to 75%, Spread to 10% and Size to 111px to finish it off.

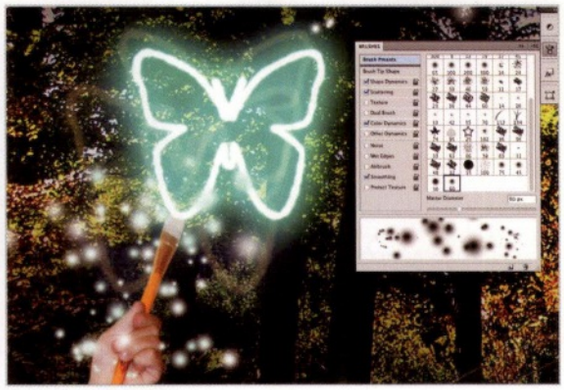


Duplicate and offset

12 Duplicate the Butterfly layer and offset it a few times with the Move tool (V). Lower the Opacity of the duplicates and tweak the Outer Glow settings and colour.

More shapes

13 Duplicate the Butterfly group and customise each copy's Size, Opacity and colour. Now load some more shape categories to broaden your options, then create different shapes using the same steps that we took to create the butterfly. For our example, we used the colour #FF00BA, but feel free to experiment.



Magic brush

14 Grab the Brush tool. Load 'Stars.abr' from the Brush palette. Set the foreground to #0FCEB1 and the background to #FFFFFF. Create a new layer named Stars and paint magic around the girl's brush.

Stars

15 Continue adding stars throughout the image. Try different sizes and opacities. The brush jitters between the foreground/background colours, so if you want white stars, for example, set both colours to white.

Merge layers

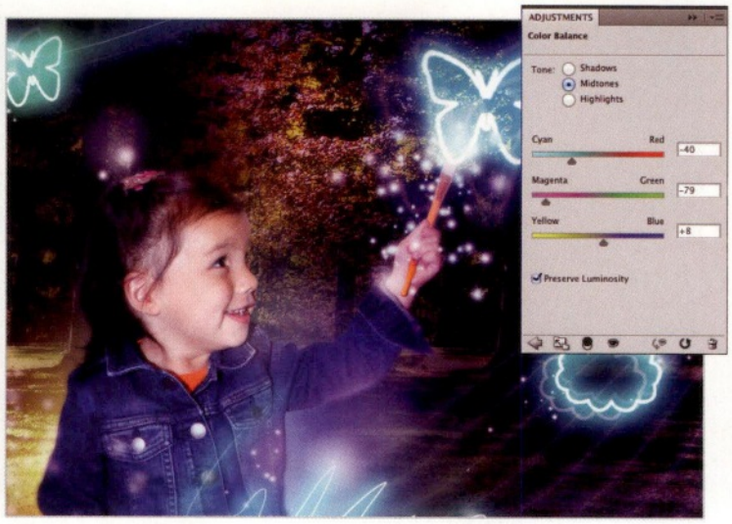
16 Add a layer to the top named Merged. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a composite of visible layers. Ctrl/right-click on the layer and select Convert to Smart Object (skip if you don't have CS4+).

Gaussian Blur

17 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set the radius to 9.5 pixels and click OK. Apply a Layer mask using the icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Use a soft, black brush to paint out the blur in areas like the girl's face.

Glows

18 Create a new layer named Glows. With the foreground colour set to white, choose the Gradient tool (G) and set the gradient type to Radial and Opacity to 100%. Click and drag light glares throughout. Lower the gradient's opacity to create lesser glares.



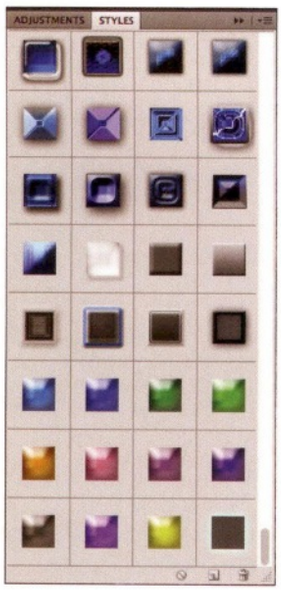
Color Balance

19 We'll now apply a series of Adjustment and Fill layers to finalise the look. Click on the black and white circle icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and choose Color Balance. The recommended settings for this are (from top to bottom) -40, -79 and +8.

Expert tip

Saving styles

When you need to reuse a combination of layer styles over and over again, save them as presets in the Styles palette. Select the layer that has the styles attached, then go to the Styles palette and click on the Create new style button at the bottom. A new preset will then be added to the list. You can drag the presets to target layers or simply click on the preset when a layer is selected.



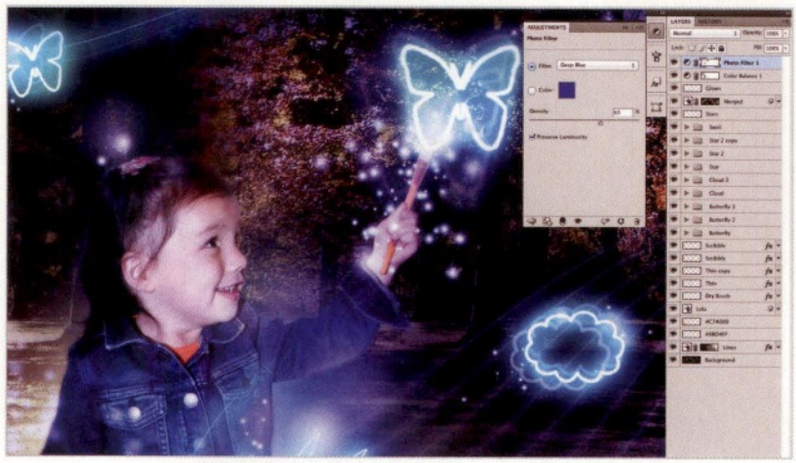
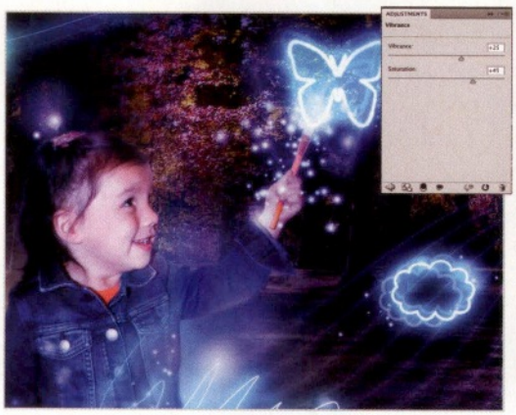


Photo Filter

20 Click on the same black and white icon from step 19 and this time choose Photo Filter. Set the filter to Deep Blue and the Density to 65%, or create your own look by playing around with the settings. Use a soft, black brush to paint out the effect areas within the mask.

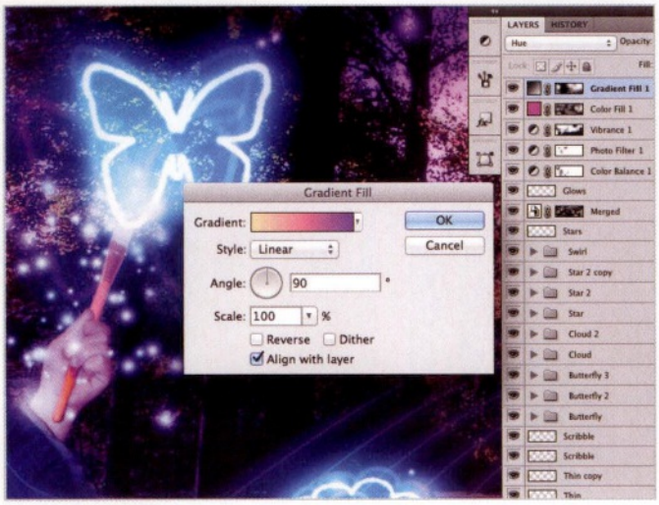


Vibrance

21 Now add a Vibrance adjustment layer (use Hue/Saturation if you don't have CS4+). Pump up the Vibrance to 25 and Saturation to 45. As with all these adjustments, feel free to experiment with your own settings and be sure to paint out effect areas in the mask.

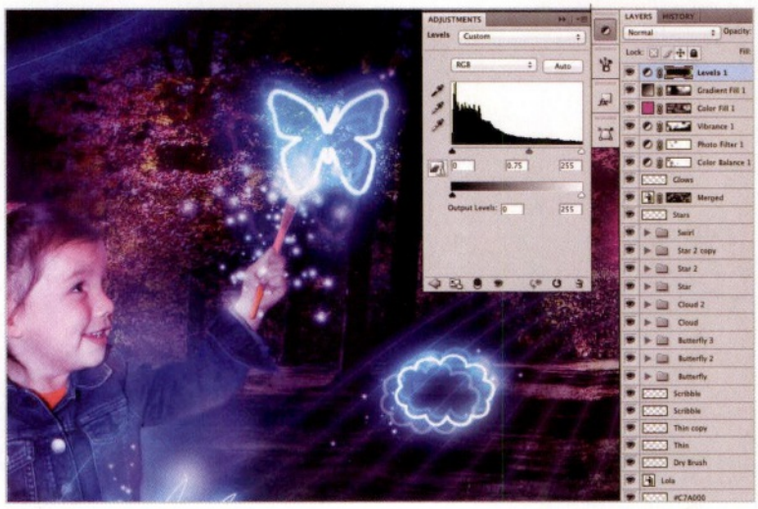
Colour fill

22 Set your foreground colour to #E417E6. Click on the same icon as the previous steps and choose Solid Color. Set the blend mode to Screen and drop Opacity to 40%. Using your judgement, paint out colour in the mask.



Gradient fill

23 Now add a Gradient fill layer. Set the blend mode to Hue. Click on the Gradient drop-down arrow, then click on the fly-out menu and load Pastels. Choose the Yellow, Pink, Purple preset. Now paint out the left hand area in the mask.

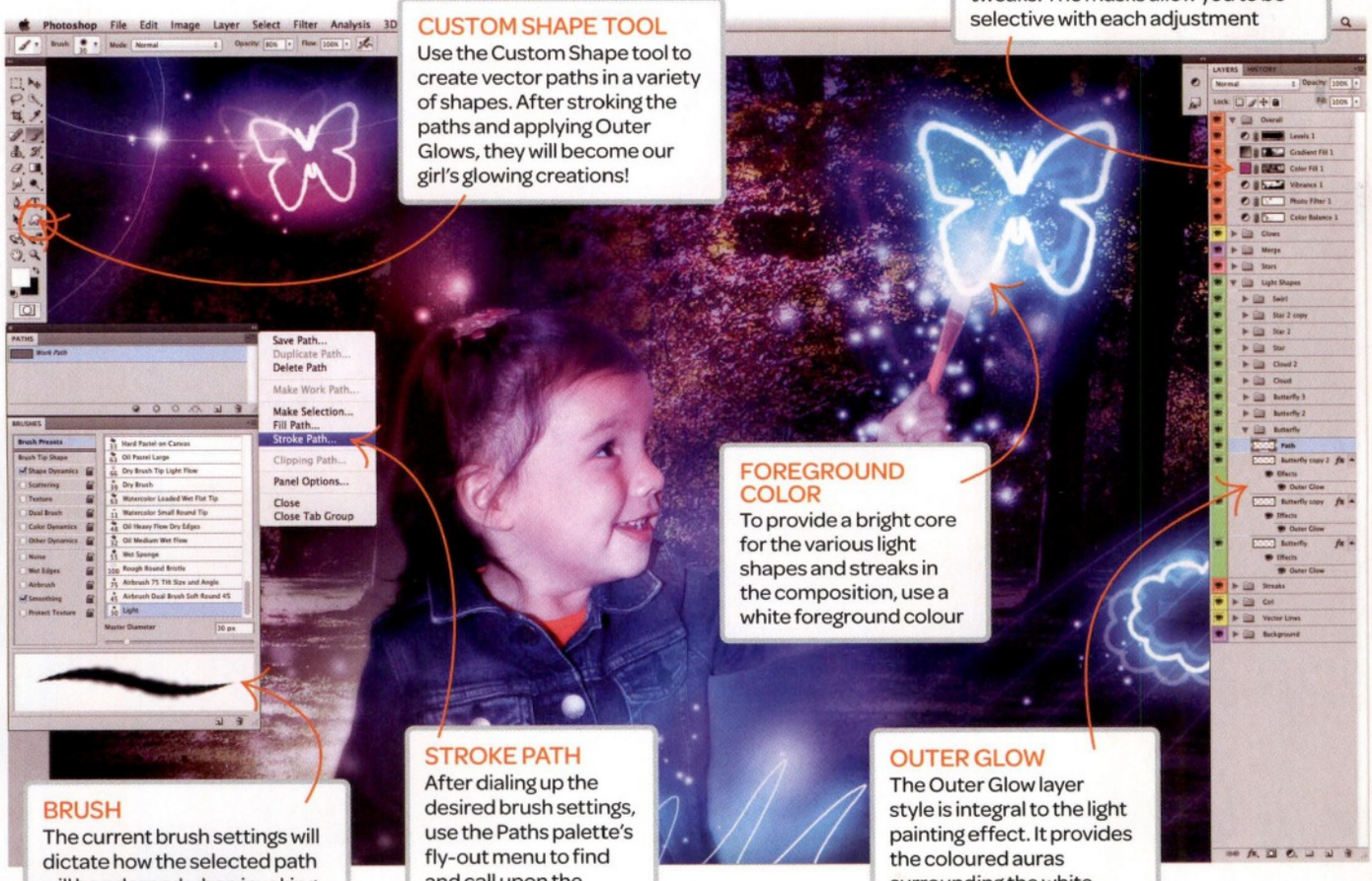


Levels

24 Finally, add a Levels adjustment layer. Set the Midtone to 0.75. Fill the mask with black. Set the foreground colour to white and use a soft brush at 80% Opacity to paint in the darkening adjustment in the edges and select areas around the image.

Closer look Inside the magic

Custom shapes, glows and some deft brushwork create the effect



CUSTOM SHAPE TOOL

Use the Custom Shape tool to create vector paths in a variety of shapes. After stroking the paths and applying Outer Glows, they will become our girl's glowing creations!

ADJUSTMENT/FILL LAYERS

Adjustment and Fill Layers at the top of the stack allow for overall colour tweaks. The masks allow you to be selective with each adjustment

FOREGROUND COLOR

To provide a bright core for the various light shapes and streaks in the composition, use a white foreground colour

BRUSH

The current brush settings will dictate how the selected path will be adorned when invoking the Stroke Path command

STROKE PATH

After dialing up the desired brush settings, use the Paths palette's fly-out menu to find and call upon the Stroke Path command

OUTER GLOW

The Outer Glow layer style is integral to the light painting effect. It provides the coloured auras surrounding the white shapes and streaks

Scrapbook effect

Explore a variety of selection tools while creating a fun scrapbook look

Essentials

What you'll learn

Filters
Magic wand tool
Quick mask mode
Selection tools

Time taken

2 hours

If you've ever spent any considerable amount of time scrapbooking, the chances are good that you've discovered the simple joy of the torn paper collage. There's something about creating a recognisable scene out of ripped scraps of paper that pulls our memories back to primary school. Throw in a photo of a friend or a loved one and you have created a craft project so rich in nostalgia that you can almost smell the paste and construction paper!

In the next few pages we'll explore how to re-create those projects in Photoshop. Along the way we'll visit some of the selections tools, explore their uses and show how they can be helpful. While the final effect is fun and whimsical, the point of the tutorial is to see different selection techniques in action. So fire up Photoshop and join us in a light-hearted stroll into the realm of ripped paper collages. There are no source files on the disc for this, but most images will work in a collage.

Cloudy forecast

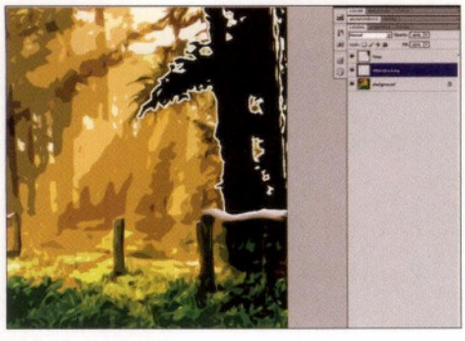
01 Begin with a new file at 512 x 512px. Make sure the colours are set to default and go to Filter>Render>Clouds. Save this file as 'Clouds.psd' and close it. This is what will be used later for a displacement map. Open a landscape image.

Filter fun

02 Go to Filter>Blur>Smart Blur, setting the Radius to 25 and the Threshold to 50. Be sure the quality is set to High and press OK. Now go to Filter>Artistic>Cutout and set the options to 6, 6 and 1. This should leave you with a fun, cut-out effect.

Cut the trees

03 Use the paintbrush to fill in some of the holes in the trees to the top right, then grab the Magic Wand tool and check Contiguous. Click once on the tree shapes to select them and press Ctrl/Cmd+J to copy the shape to a new layer.



White backing

04 Create a new layer under the trees. Go to Select>Modify>Expand and enter a value of 15px. Be sure the focus is on the new layer and fill the selection with white (Edit>Fill) then cancel it with Ctrl/Cmd+D.

Simulate ripped paper

05 To break up the white outline, go to Filter>Distort>Displacement. Enter 15 in the vertical and horizontal fields and check Tile. Photoshop will prompt you for a displacement map, so point to 'Clouds.psd.' Add an Inner Shadow layer style to complete the illusion.

Quick mask

06 Use the Polygonal Lasso tool to sketch out a sunray selection then press Q to enter Quick Mask mode. The screen will show a ruby overlay for areas that are not in the selection.

Selection tools

A quick roundup of the best tools for creating collages

LASSO TOOLS

Draw it out

Arguably the most intuitive of the selection tools in Photoshop is the Lasso. The regular Lasso simply requires you to outline the selection by dragging your mouse. The Polygonal Lasso is used by creating a series of clicks to define points.

Add mode

Selections can be built one shape at a time by selecting the Add to Selection mode in the Options bar.

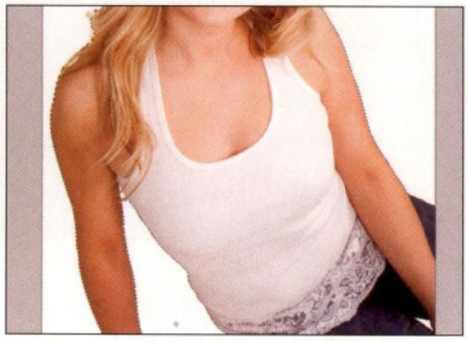
Power of magnetism

The Magnetic Lasso tool traces round objects and settings in the Options bar control the sensitivity. Move the cursor around the edge or click to force specific points.

QUICK SELECTION TOOL

Quick, select me!

The fairly new Quick Selection tool enables you to highlight your selection by dragging within the object you wish to select. As you drag, the tool ranges outwards until it finds an edge, and then draws the selection boundary there.



Minus selection

If the selection jumps over an area you do not want, hold down the Alt/Opt key and it will deselect that area. The tool even learns as you go.

Refine Edge

The well-named Refine Edge button opens a dialog with controls to further refine the edge of the selection, vastly improving your ability to create quality selections.

QUICK MASK

Rose-tinted view

When crafting a selection in Photoshop (not Elements), a tap of the Q key will turn on Quick Mask mode. This creates a pink mask and enables you to treat the selection as a pixel layer.

Painted selections

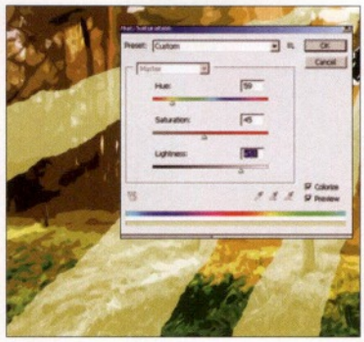
In Quick Mask mode, selections can literally be painted. You are limited to shades of grey, much like working a layer mask. White adds to the selection and black removes.

Going deeper

Regular adjustments like Levels and Curves can also tweak a Quick Mask. You can even use the regular selection tools to limit the application of the adjustments; create a selection within the mask!

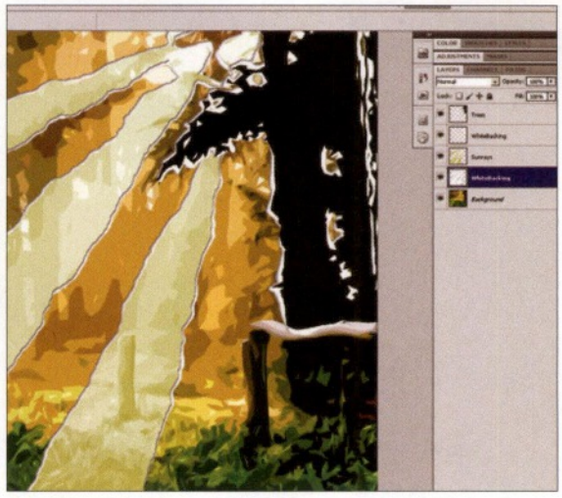
Displaced selection

07 Quick Mask mode enables you to treat the selection like a regular pixel layer, which gives access to the painting and filter tools. Run the Displacement filter again with settings of 25px to roughen up the sunray shapes. Press Q again to exit Quick Mask mode.



Drops of sunlight

08 Press Ctrl/Cmd+J to copy the rays selection to a new layer. Then go to Image> Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Click the Colorize box and make adjustments to create a bright yellow, sunny hue. Now finish off by adding a subtle drop shadow to the layer. This will set it off from the background.



More ripped paper

09 Use the same technique for the white paper backing for the sunrays. Experiment with the vertical and horizontal settings of the Displace filter. These numbers can be negative to create displacement in the opposite direction too.

Refine Edge

10 Drop in a picture of a person. Use the Quick Selection tool to create a marquee around her and press the Refine Edge button in the Options bar. Use the controls to smooth out and expand the selection, set Output to Layer Mask and then hit OK.

Model treatment

11 Click on the model's mask thumbnail to focus on the mask and run the Displacement filter to give the layer the same rough-edge treatment. Add another white backing layer for the model as was done for the previous elements.

Cut flowers

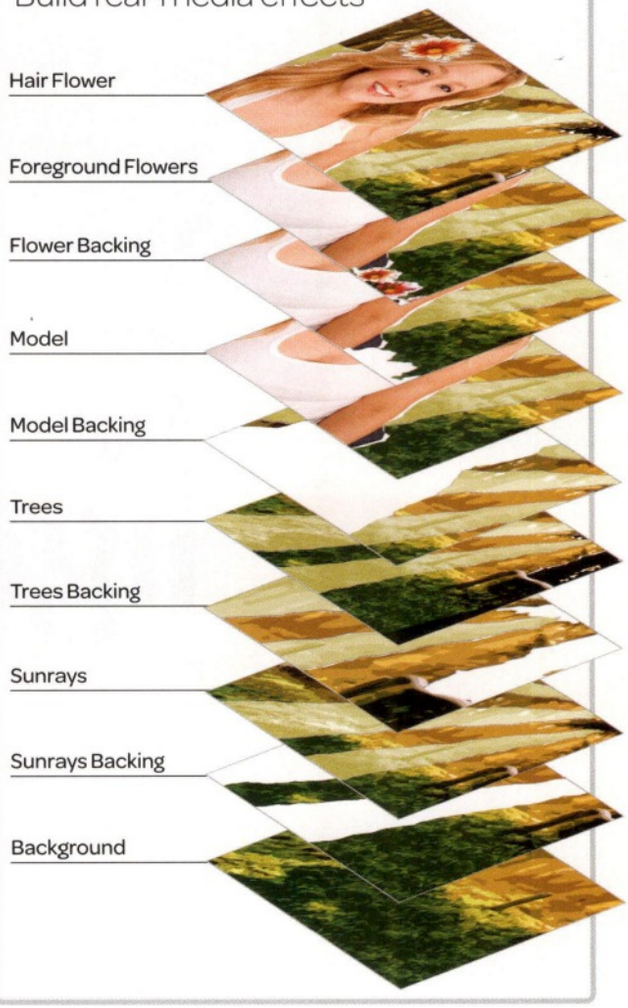
12 Open a picture of flowers. Use the Smart Blur and Cutout filters again to create a similar effect on the flowers so they match up with the background and then use the selection tools to create a marquee around a bunch.

Final flowers

13 Cut and paste several flowers into the scene. Combine the foreground flower layers together by selecting them all and pressing Ctrl/Cmd+E, then use the techniques you've learned to create the same torn paper effect once again.

Layer structure

Build real-media effects



Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Get creative with blurs, filters and adjustments

Time taken

1 hour

Create light effects

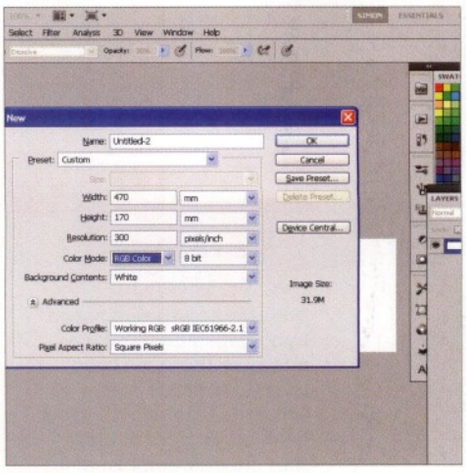
Learn how to achieve a dazzling light effect using just the basic text tools, adjustment layers and Photoshop filters

Light is an awesome subject to work with because it comes in so many different forms. It can be diffused, reflected, refracted and even ambient, and can make an image really attention grabbing. When we are dealing with flat objects in Photoshop, it can also be used to create stunning 3D effects. In this tutorial we will be using light to shine through and around a solid object to give the impression that the picture is three dimensional.

The light is made by creating an outline around some text. We then use the Wind and Radial Blur filters to make the outline look as if it's moving forward. Some of the light is blocked out using the original text we created to make the light seem as if it's coming around the object and through the holes in the letters. Finally the light is coloured using a Gradient adjustment layer to give the image a really punchy, vibrant finish.

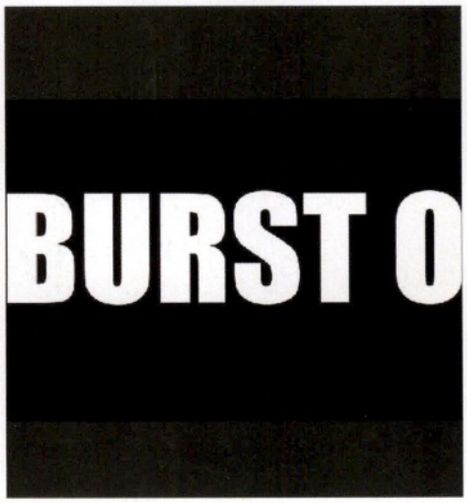
PHOTOSHOP CS & PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS | **WORKS WITH**

FLIGHT



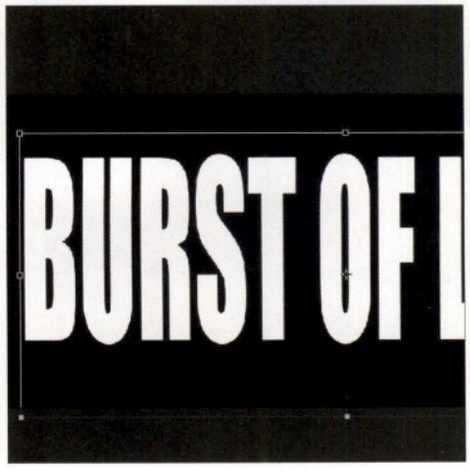
Create the document

01 Begin the image by creating a new Photoshop document (File>New). Set the dimensions to 470mm wide by 170mm high with PPI set to 300. Also, set your Background colour to black. You can do this by using the Fill tool via Edit>Fill>Black.



Write the text

02 Now select the Type tool and set the Font to Impact in the top Options bar, change the size to 358pt and change the colour to white. Now type 'burst of light', and this will create a new text layer.



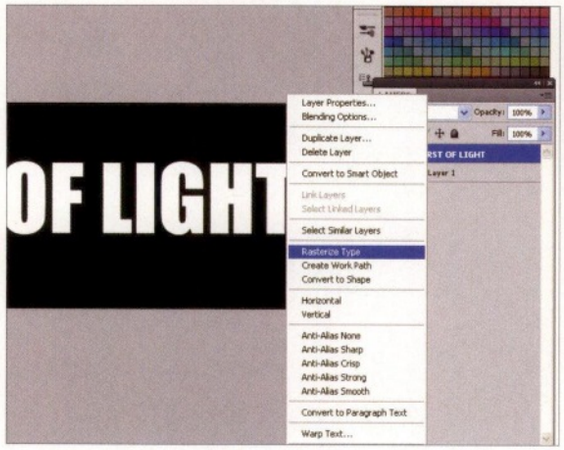
Resize and reposition

03 Navigate to the Free Transform command via Edit>Free Transform, resize the text by pushing the side anchors in and pull the top anchor up and the bottom anchor down. Position the text in the middle of the page.

Expert tip

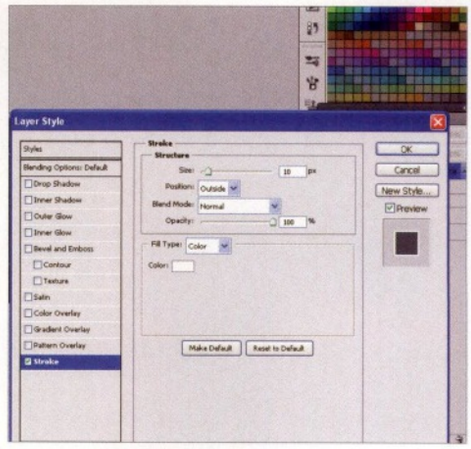
Dust particles

To enhance this effect we added a layer of dust particles (with the blend mode set to Screen) above the Radial Blur layer. First we create a new image, something fairly small like 1,024 x 768mm is fine. Press D on the keyboard to reset to the colour swatches in the Toolbar, followed by a pass with the Clouds filter. We then add 15% Noise (with Distribution set to Gaussian and Monochrome ticked). Finally we use Levels and adjust the black point slider until the dust is visible.



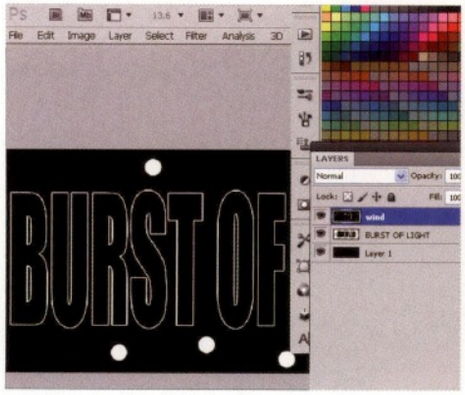
Rasterise

04 Once you are happy with the words, it's time to rasterise the text. Ctrl/right-click the thumbnail in the Layers palette and select Rasterize Type. The text is no longer editable, but you can invert the colours of the layer by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I.



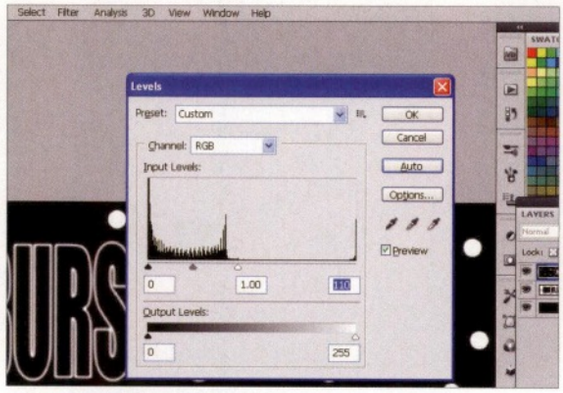
Stroke style

05 Duplicate the rasterised text layer by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J and rename this new layer Wind. Add a Stroke layer style via Layer>Layer Style>Stroke, then set the stroke Size to 10px and the Color to white.



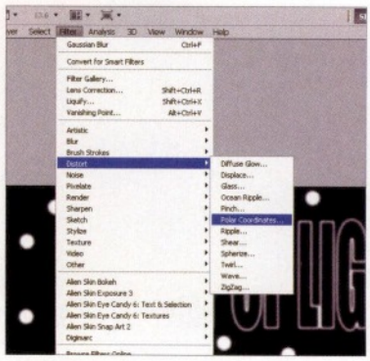
Merge the layers

06 Add a new layer under Wind and fill with black. Select a hard brush and add some random white dots over the layer. Merge the two together by selecting the Wind layer and pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J.



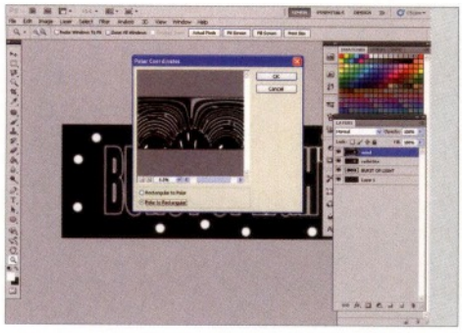
Blur and brighten

07 Apply the Gaussian Blur filter (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) and set the Radius to 10px. The text is a little dull but we can brighten it using Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L or Image>Adjustments>Levels), moving the white point slider until the letters are white.



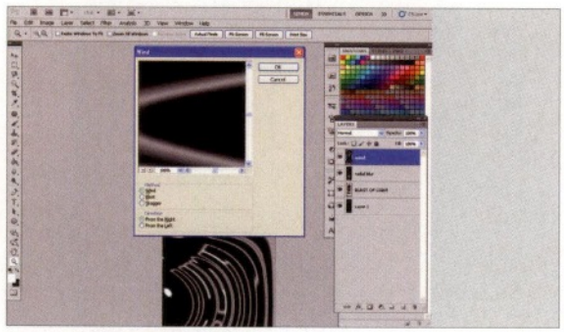
Polar Co-ordinates

08 Copy the layer we just created (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and rename it Radial Blur. Go back to your Wind layer and select the Polar Co-ordinates filter (Filter>Distort>Polar Co-ordinates).



Distort and rotate

09 With the Polar Co-ordinates filter active, select the Polar to Rectangle Option and rotate the canvas 90° clockwise (Image>Image Rotation>90° CW). With this done we invert the colours (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and select the Wind filter (Filter>Stylize>Wind).



The Wind filter

10 Set the Method to Wind and the Direction to From the Right, then click OK and repeat this two more times. Select the Wind filter again and set the Direction to From the Left. Invert the colours and apply the Wind filter once more as before, three times from the right and three times from the left.

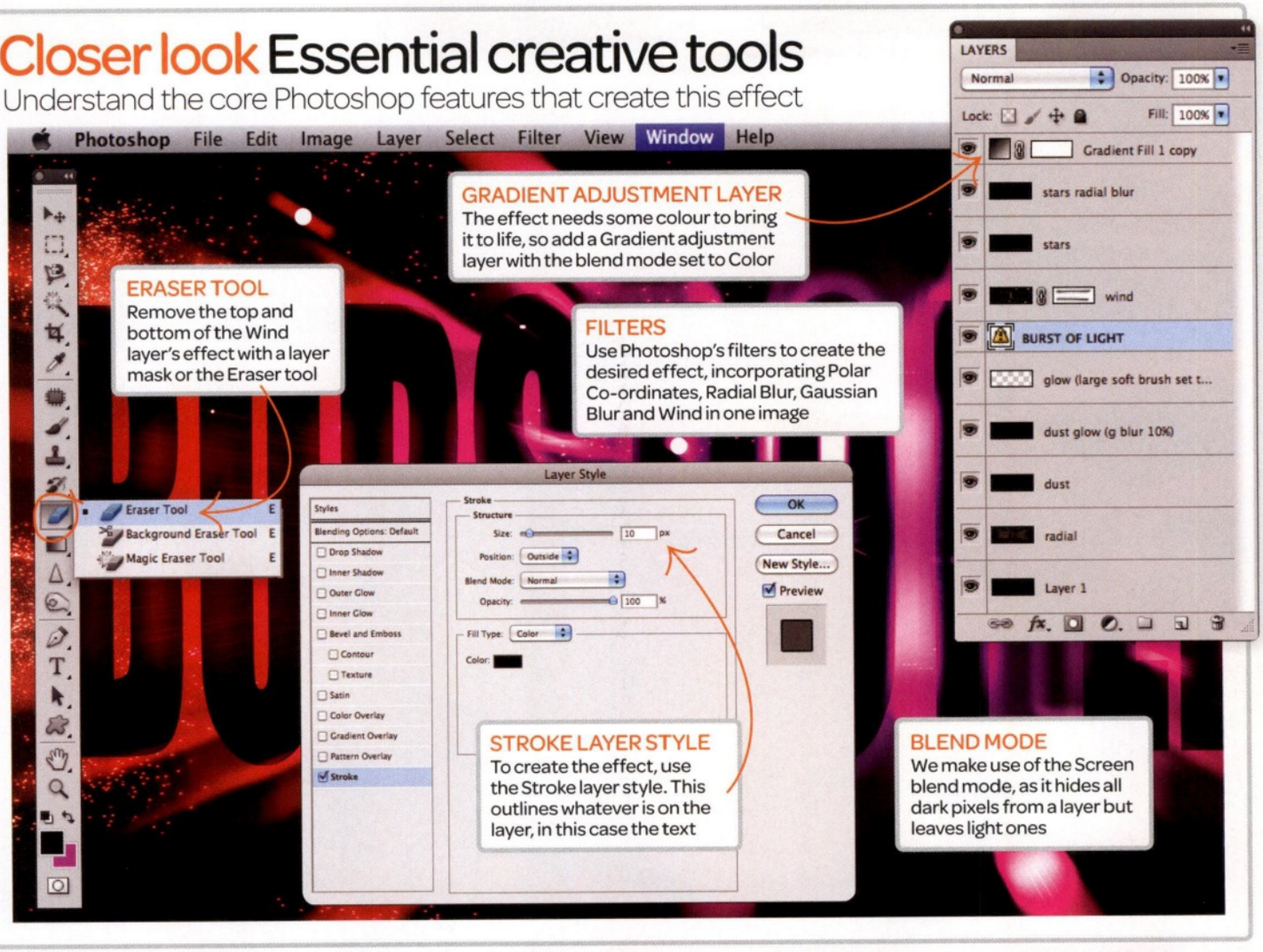
Expert tip

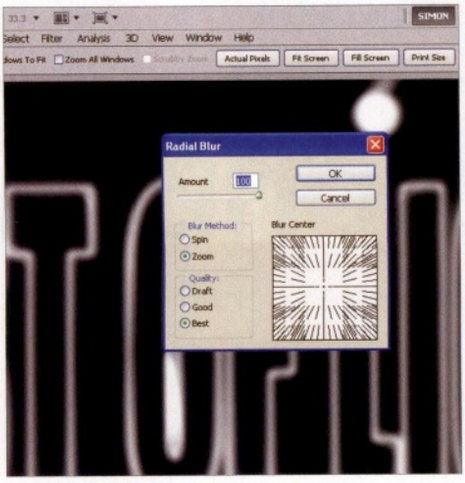
Enhance with stars

The effect can be enhanced by adding some stars on a new layer above the Wind layer. To create these we simply need to select a small, hard-edged brush and set the Foreground colour to white. Randomly click in different places over the whole document. Duplicate the layer and apply the Radial Blur filter to the duplicate with an Amount of 10-20. Finish by setting the layer's blend mode to Screen.

Closer look Essential creative tools

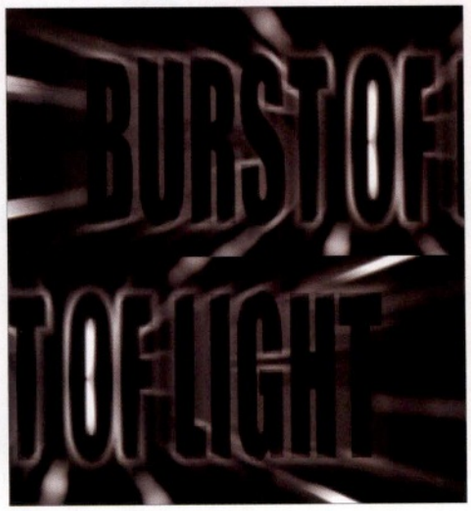
Understand the core Photoshop features that create this effect





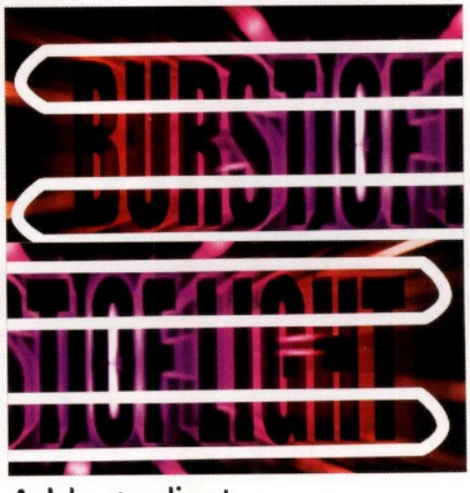
Lines of light

11 Rotate the image 90° CCW and select the Polar Co-ordinates filter again, but this time set it to Rectangle to Polar. To make the lines appear a bit smoother, use the Radial Blur filter (Filter>Blur>Radial Blur), setting the Amount to 25, Method to Zoom and Quality to Best to create lines of light.



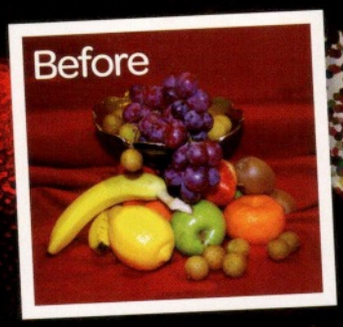
Wind and blur

12 Set the blend mode of the Wind layer to Screen and then select the Radial Blur layer. Repeat the Radial Blur filter on this layer but set the Amount to 100 this time around. Drag the text layer between the Wind and the Radial Blur layers.



Add a gradient

13 Add a Gradient adjustment layer (blend mode set to Color) above the Wind layer and load the supplied 'orange to pink.grd' gradient file, setting Style to Radial and Angle to 0°. Select the Eraser tool and remove the top and bottom parts of the effect created on the Wind layer.



Modern Expressionism

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

To augment Pointillize Filters using Adjustments, levels, curves, masks and blend modes

Time taken

1 hour

Use the creative technique of one of the greatest painters, but with a modern day digital twist

Georges Seurat was a French post-impressionist painter whose easily recognisable style of painting was what made him and his paintings so memorable. His unique painting technique was known as Pointillism and this style was hugely influential on modern art.

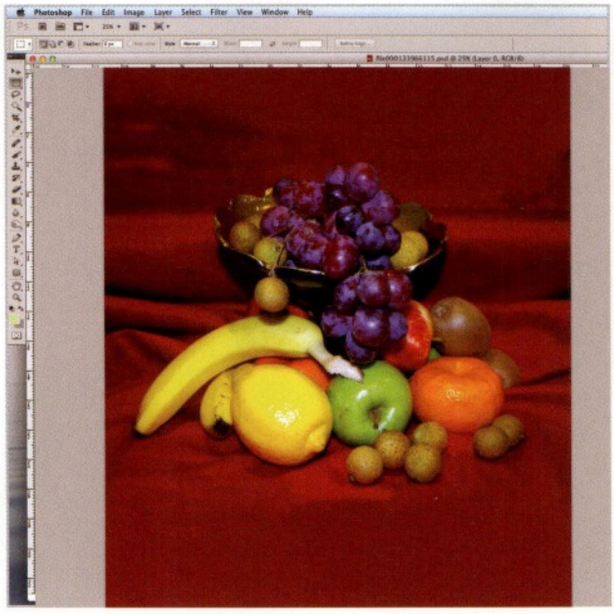
Seurat believed that the correct use of colour could create emotion and harmony within a painting, with calmness being created through a perfect balance of light and dark plus warm and cool colours; sway too much with one of these and the whole ambience alters.

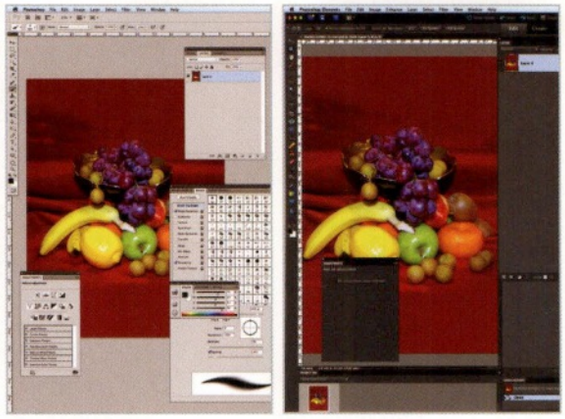
The Pointillist style is what we will be re-creating in Photoshop throughout this tutorial, using the balance of tones and colours to create the perfect image. Photoshop and Photoshop Elements both come with an easy to use Filter that is hidden under Filter>Pixelate>Pointillize, and which allows you to place the effect onto your photos quickly and easily with a little experimentation.

Once the effect has been applied we will then use Photoshop's other fantastic features to create the perfect ambience, resulting in an image that Seurat would have been proud of.

Choose the correct image

01 Open your start image – ours is from MorgueFile.com, which hosts tons of royalty free photos, and you can find it in your resource pack. We chose this image as it is filled with colours that push Seurat's Pointillist style to the max, so ensure you do the same if using an alternative image.



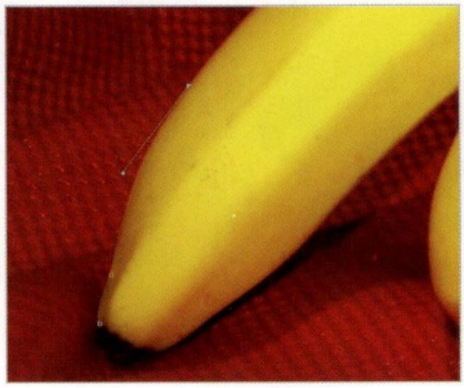


Photoshop CS or Elements

02 We are working in Photoshop CS5, but this tutorial can be created in any version of Photoshop CS and also Photoshop Elements. If at any point the instructions differ between the programs, we will point it out so that you can follow with ease.

Isolate the fruit

03 Select the Pen tool (P) from the Toolbar and, in the Options bar at the top, set it to Paths. Click on the edge of the fruit to place your first anchor point. Click further along the edge for the next one.



Create a path

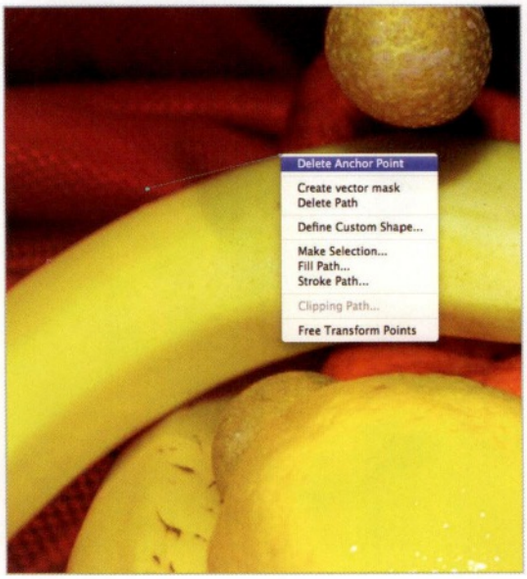
04 Each time you place an anchor point, Opt/Alt-click on it so that the point is completed. If you don't do this then when you place the next anchor point the line could shoot off in an unwanted direction.

Curve your line

05 To curve the line, click to add an anchor point, hold down your mouse and move it to make the line arch. Release your mouse when happy, Opt/Alt-click the anchor point and keep tracing.

Delete an anchor point

06 To remove an Anchor point, just Opt/Alt-click onto an anchor point to bring up a little menu and then select Delete. You can then carry on working around your shape. To end the path once you have traced around the outline of the fruit, just make sure that the last anchor point is placed on top of your first one.



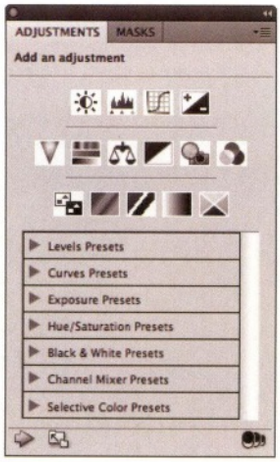
Create a new layer

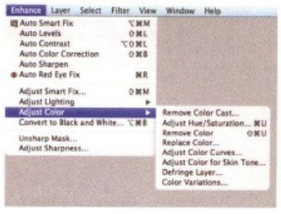
07 With your path complete, go to the Paths palette. Cmd/Ctrl-click onto the path's thumbnail to create an active selection and return to the Layers palette. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to lift the selection onto its own layer, minus the red background.

Expert tip

Adjustment Layers

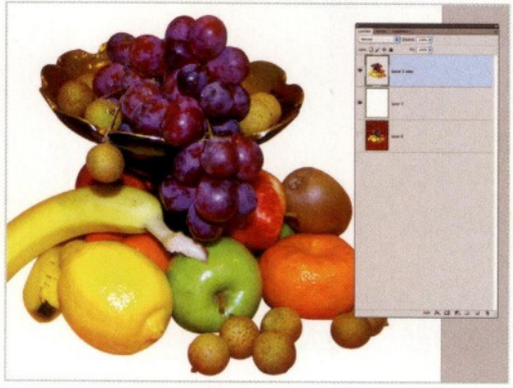
If your image's colours need a boost, or need to be softened to look more like the Great Master's work, use Adjustment layers. These are editable, non-destructive effects that can be applied to one or several layers at once. In Photoshop CS, they live under Window>Adjustments or at the base of the Layers palette. In Elements they are found in the Enhance menu. In both programs, the functions work the same and produce amazing results.





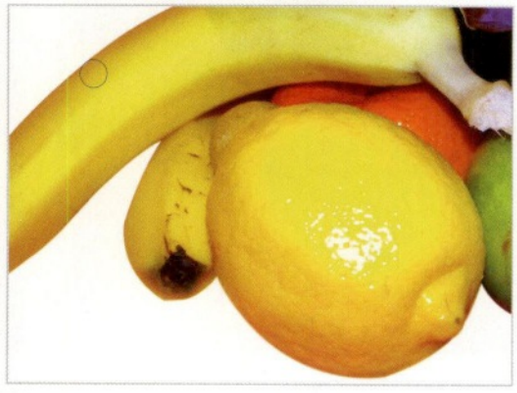
Tidy up internally

08 Click on the eye icon next to the bottom layer in the palette to hide it. With the Pen tool, trace around any internal red shapes that you want to get rid of, make an active selection in the Paths palette and then, making sure you're on the correct layer in the Layers palette, hit Delete to clear the unwanted shapes.



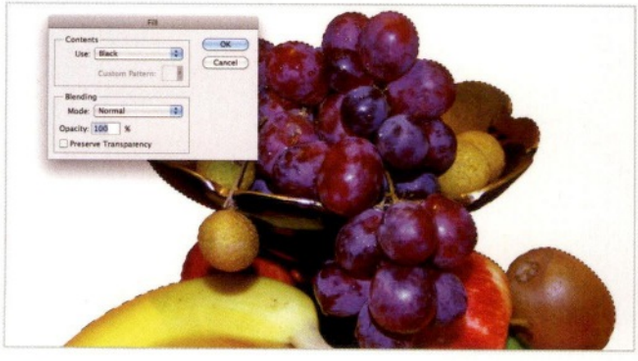
Soften and lock

09 Add a new white layer by pressing the New Layer button at the bottom of the Layers palette, then position it under the top layer. Click on the top layer, select the Blur tool (R) and start softening around the edges. Press the Lock icon at the top of the Layers palette.



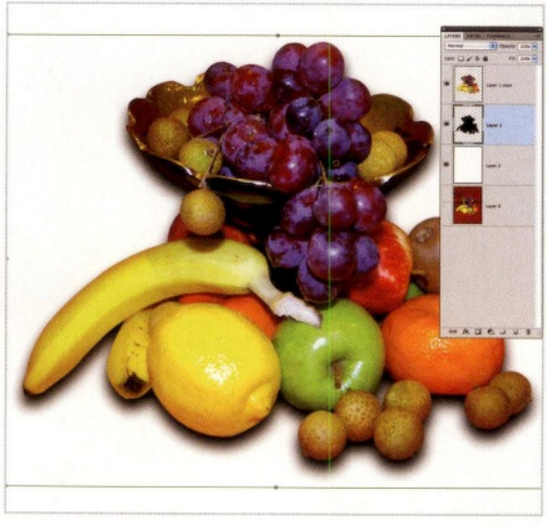
Cover up

10 Pick the Brush tool (B) from the Toolbar and, in the top options bar, make sure it is soft edged at 60% Opacity. Now, to get rid of red tints around the edges of the fruit, Opt/Alt-click on the banana to sample a darker tone of yellow. Paint along the edges of the fruit, hiding any red.



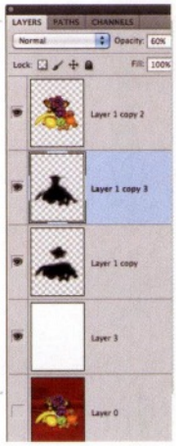
Fill a selection

11 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate this layer. Select the lowest fruit layer and Cmd/Ctrl-click on it to create an active selection. Press Shift+F5 to open the Fill palette, fill with Black and click OK. Hit M and click onto the canvas to deselect.



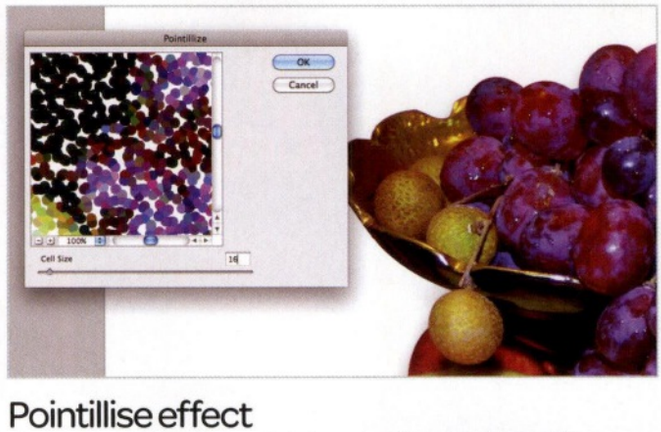
Add a convincing shadow

12 Still working on the filled layer, go to Filter> Blur>Gaussian and add a blur of 30 pixels. Lower this layer's Opacity to 80% in the Layers palette. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to activate Transform, then nudge this blurred layer downwards to sit as a shadow.



Erase unwanted areas

13 Select the Eraser tool (E) from the Toolbar, setting it to soft edges at 40% Opacity, and erase the top part of the shadow. Duplicate this layer and nudge it further down the page, then lower its Opacity to 30%. Now set the foreground/background colours to white in the Toolbar.

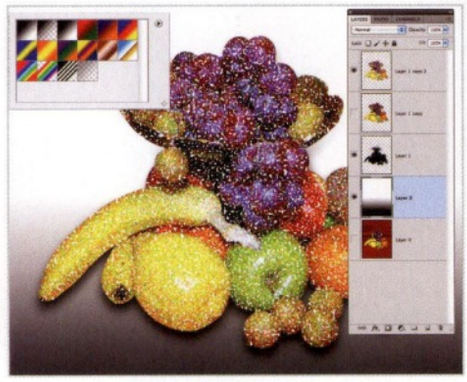


Pointillise effect

14 Duplicate the top fruit layer and then hide one for safekeeping. Click onto the visible layer and then go to Filter>Pixelate>Pointillize. We set Radius to 15 but experiment to see which effects you like the best. Hit OK when you're happy.

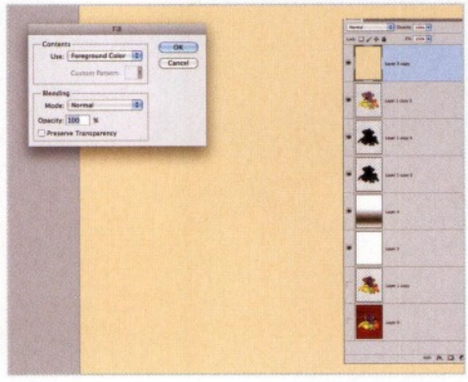
Selective colouring

15 Setting our Toolbar colours to white allows the white to show through when the Pointillise effect is applied. If you change these colours in the Toolbar, the effect will be transformed. Next, click onto the plain white layer in the Layers palette.



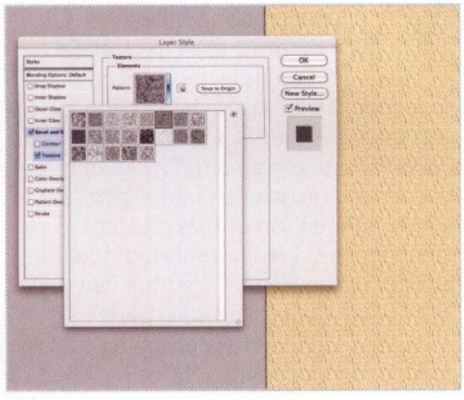
Add a gradient

16 Select the Gradient tool (G) from the side Toolbar. Set the foreground colour to black. In the top Options bar, select the Foreground to Background option, then on your canvas hold down Shift to keep a straight line and draw upwards.



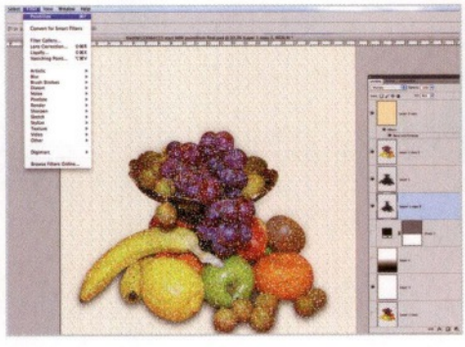
Build up your layers palette

17 Select the Brush tool (B), set to 40% Opacity, soft edged. Click onto the gradient layer's mask thumbnail in the Layers palette and mask away the bottom part of the gradient. Add a new layer to the top of the stack and fill it with a light cream.



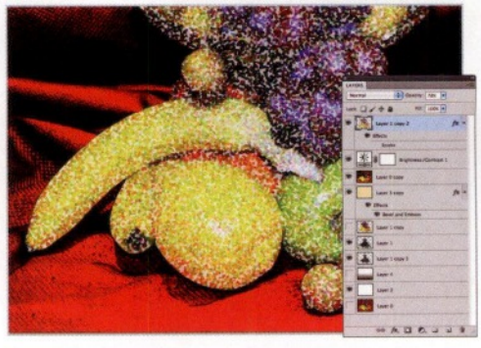
Add a canvas effect

18 Double-click the cream layer and check the Texture option. Choose Canvas and lower the Scale to 40%, then hit OK. Set this layer's blend mode to Multiply in the Layers palette and lower the Fill to 30%.



Add in more spots

19 Click onto the top shadow layer and add a Pointillise effect to it, at the same scale as the fruit layer (15). Repeat this process to the lowest shadow layer. You can get more definition from the fruit shapes by using the Dodge tool (O), set to Shadows, to paint round some of the more vague shapes.



Bring back the background

20 For a final flourish, try Cmd/Ctrl-click on the fruit layer's thumbnail to make an active selection. Click on the Background layer containing the red fabric and add a new layer mask. Drag the layer to the top of the layer stack and then go to the Filter menu. Apply a Fresco filter to finish.

Make art with type

Capture your holiday memories in a single piece of artwork using the coolest Photoshop techniques

What better way to encapsulate your amazing holiday memories than to create a personal and unforgettable piece of art? Give this to your loved ones or the friends you travelled with as a gift, or use it as a cover for a photo album. Typography is the art and technique of arranging text into a coherent order that creates language. It's a really important tool to communicate ideas – from the font you use to the spacing between each character. Until the digital age only a few people had the privilege of being able to set type (like graphic designers, typesetters and compositors), but now thanks to Photoshop we're all able to experiment! This is why you'll really love this tutorial and will be able to transfer the skills and typographic techniques you learn here to all your other projects.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

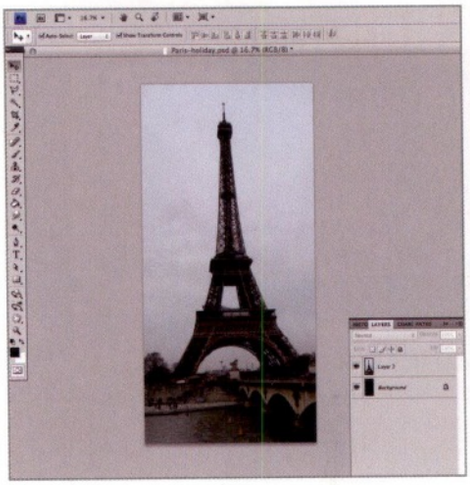
Essentials

What you'll learn

Create impressive graphic art with the Type tool, shapes and textures

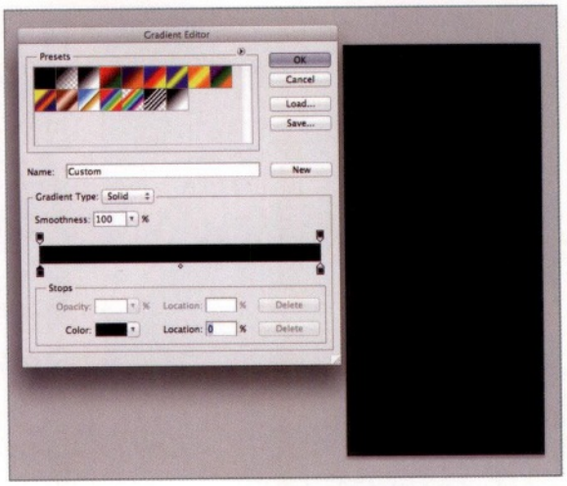
Time taken

40 minutes



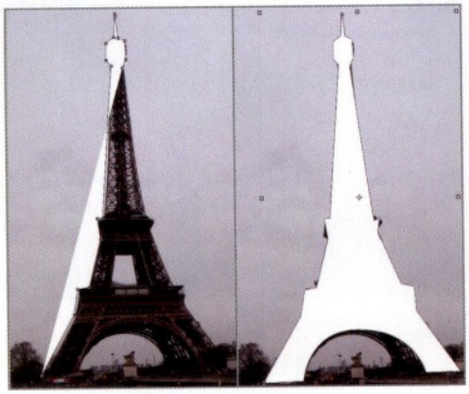
Let's get started

01 Find your favourite holiday snapshot. Here we're using one of the iconic Eiffel Tower taken on a recent trip to Paris. Open up a new document in Photoshop and place the image on a new layer.



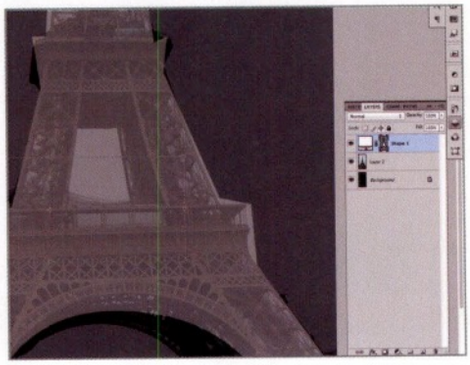
Create your background

02 Using a Foreground colour of a light black (#121212) and a Background colour of pure black (#000000), select a radial gradient (G) and drag one out on a layer below the tower. The effect of the transition should be quite subtle.



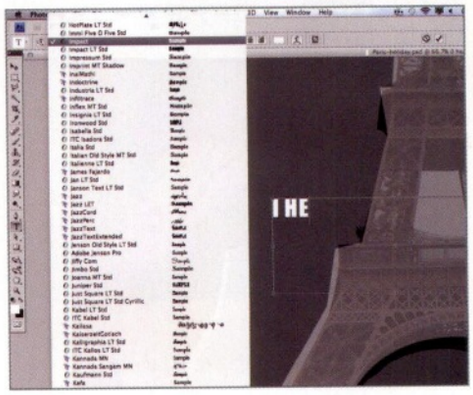
Outline your shape

03 To help you stay within the Eiffel Tower's shape, it's a good idea to draw the outline. To do this quickly, select the Pen tool (P) and create a large shape, bearing in mind it doesn't have to be perfect!



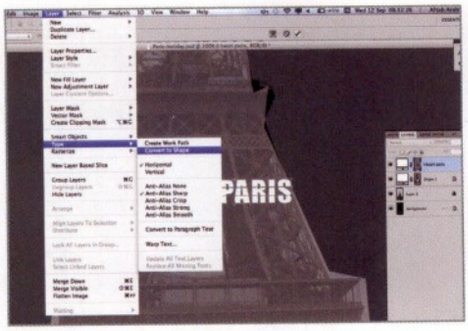
Layers to guides

04 To be able to see the intricate designs below, make both layers opaque by changing the transparency to around 40% each and then lock the layers (click on the padlock icon) so they don't accidentally move while you work.



Type away

05 Start by inserting some text at the base of the design. Choose a blocky font like Impact so the characters are quite meaty and can withstand their shape being pushed and pulled about.



Text to shapes

06 Here comes the fun bit – transforming the type into shapes. To do this make sure the text layer is selected, click on Layer>Type>Convert to Shape. It will transform into a shape layer.

Warp the text

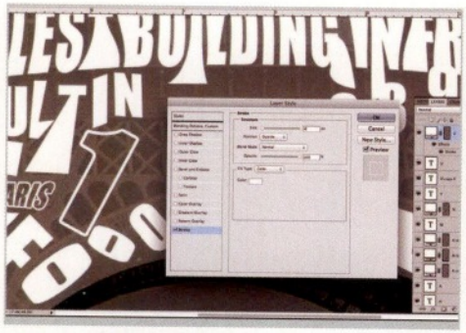
07 As the layer is no longer text based, you can start warping and manipulating the shape. With the layer selected, click Edit>Transform>Warp. The shape then turns into a grid, which you can manipulate in any way you want.

Anchor points

08 For individual characters we can turn a letter into a shape layer and then play with the anchor points. With the layer selected, click the Direct Selection tool (A) and pull or push on the anchor points.

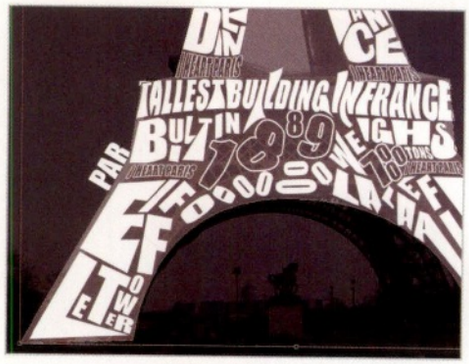
Move upwards

09 Just like the engineer Gustave Eiffel, gradually build your tower from the bottom up. Notice how we've used a combination of different characters and effects. You can even play with different fonts to achieve a unique style.



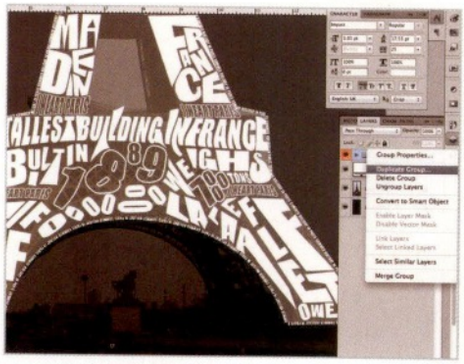
Stroke the text

10 Instead of having all the shapes filled with a single block colour, you can add some variation and just have some text outlined. To do this, select the shape layer, Ctrl/right-click and select a stroke in the Layer Style menu. Choose your colour and thickness, and press Enter. To remove the inside fill, change the Opacity to 0%.



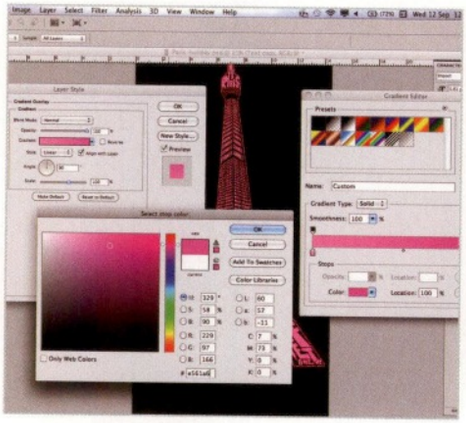
Draw around a shape

11 Another handy technique is to draw on a path. This means you can wrap text around a shape that curves. Select and unlock the guide layer we drew earlier, then grab the Type tool (T) and hover over the shape. You'll notice the mouse arrow change. Type the text as it follows around the guide.



Group text

12 Now select all the text layers and group them into one folder (Layer>New>Group from Layers). Duplicate this folder and hide one (so we can keep the original layers safe). Ctrl/right-click the new group and merge them into a single layer. Hide the guide layer and photo as well.

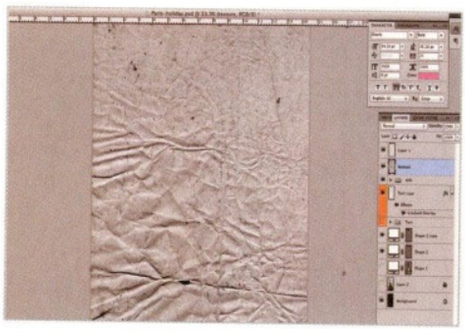


Add a gradient

13 Add a gradient overlay to your text. Select the newly merged layer and go to Layer>Layer Style>Gradient Overlay. You can choose any colour you like, but we used #ff95bd to #e561a6.

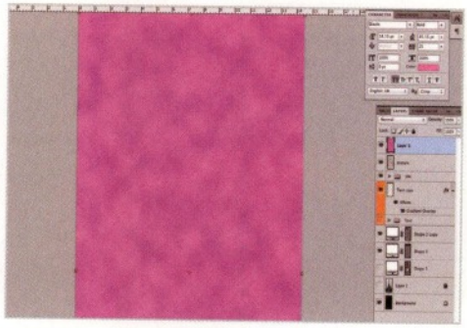
Naming ceremony

14 It's time to name your creation. Use whatever title you wish to sum up the image and try placing it in different positions around the page to see which one works the best. Remember the gradient colours you used in the previous step? You can use the same on the text as well!



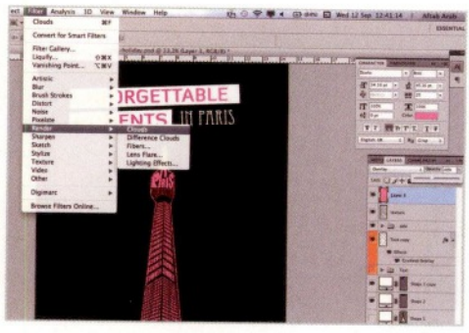
Texturise

15 To take your creation to the next level, you can add a light texture to the whole document. Place the texture layer over your work, desaturate the image by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U and then change the blend mode to Overlay.



Make it vibrant

16 We need to add a bit more vibrancy to the document. Create a new layer and select #ea8fbf for the Foreground colour and #000000 for the Background. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds and set the layer to Overlay at 40% Opacity.



Final touches

17 Just before you finish, create another layer and change the Background colour to #ffffff. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds and this will fill the layer with gold and white clouds. Change the Opacity to around 40% and your image is done!

Creative type projects

Type inspiration

Want to try something else? Get inspired by the world of typography

After completing this tutorial, you'll be really eager to try out some new designs. Start by searching online for maps and typography posters, or anything else that takes your fancy! Look up David Carson, an American graphic designer best known for his experimental typography, and use this as inspiration and a base for your very own experimentation. Think about colour schemes – maybe you can mix different types of media like photography and combine them with your favourite poetry in a retro style? You can even try mixing different tutorials from this magazine, but don't limit yourself to just these ideas, be creative and open minded.

Direct

This design focuses on the playful positioning of typographic elements. It uses vector shapes and bold colours to portray a fun and cool message. Use the Pen tool to draw around shapes (like countries) and, using different layers, create a balanced typographic poster. When drawing the shapes don't worry about the lack of curves – it really goes with the design. To adjust the anchor points and make it less jagged, use the shortcut key A.

The World

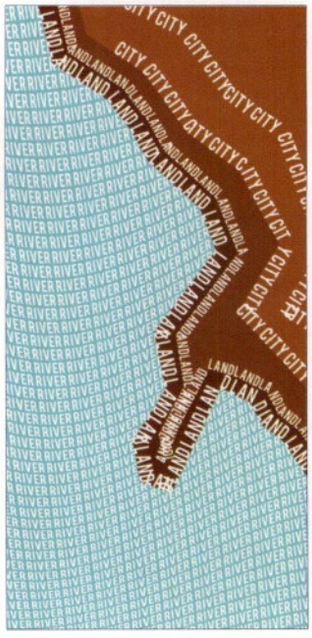
Here's something bold and ambitious – try taking over the world one country at a time! Go online and find a world map which you can trace using the Pen tool. Create different layers for the text, convert each text layer into a shape (Ctrl/right-click on it in the Layers palette) and then transform by warping it in place. Once done, turn each layer into a clipping mask over the map layer, and your world domination is complete!

Landscape

This poster uses vector shapes of recognisable landmarks and type to create a cool, modern and slick design. Use the Pen or Shape tools (U) to create simple yet effective landmarks by tracing over images you've found via a simple internet search. It doesn't have to be perfect – as long as it resembles the right shapes you're fine! Use type to complement them, play with different positions and use lines and colours to break up the monotony.

Digital topography

Try something that resembles a traditional topographic map but use text as the contours and shapes of the land. Create a shape layer and, with the Type tool selected, hover the mouse on the shape to see the cursor automatically change. Click on the line and you can now start typing. You don't just have to use maps as inspiration, think about people, architecture and faces, and go wild!



Before

Create stunning effects with custom brushes

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to create falling text using Brush Presets, the Brushes palette, the Clone Stamp and Type tools

Time taken

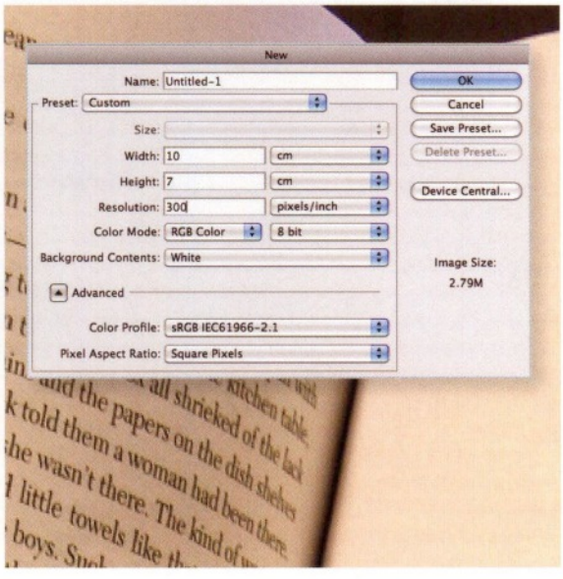
3 hours

Brushes aren't just for painting – use them to have fun with digital art such as this tumbling text effect

To create this fantastic effect we will need to put Photoshop's brush-making ability to the test. The first hurdle in forming falling words is making a brush of letters that has plenty of variation. To do this we begin with imitating the actual font of the book, typing the entire alphabet in lowercase and capitals, and mixing them up to form the new tip.

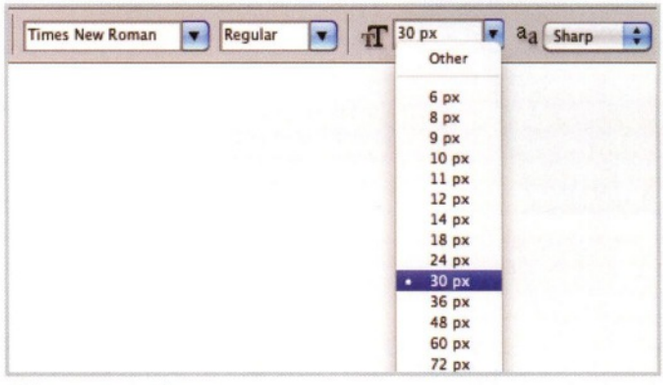
Using the options in the Brushes palette, the new brush of jumbled letters can be scattered and rotated so that it's never repeated, giving a realistic effect.

The Clone Stamp tool is one of Photoshop's most versatile features. Its uses range from retouching skin in portraits to manipulating parts of photos to deceive the eye. With it, removing the existing letters in the book is as simple as Alt/Opt-clicking and stamping. Access our starting file on your cover disc to begin creating your own falling-text effect.



New document

01 To begin with we need to make a scattered letter brush. Open up a blank document, setting its Width to 10cm and Height to 7cm. Set Resolution to 300dpi, the mode to RGB Color and then hit OK.

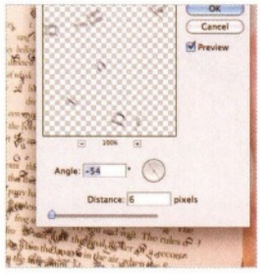


Choose a font

02 We need to replicate the exact size of the font the book uses, so select the Type tool and set the Font to Times New Roman. The book's letters are roughly 30px, so enter this under Font Size in the Options bar. Set Anti-aliasing to Sharp.

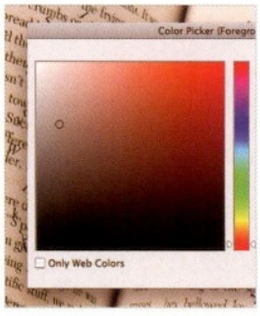
Improve the effect

Elements added to photos don't always blend in as much as you might like. Here's how to fix them...



Add blur

Convert the Letters layer for Smart Filters (Filter>Convert for Smart Filters in CS3 and above). Apply a subtle Motion Blur filter and use its layer mask to edit any fuzzy letters out.



Color picker

When using the Brush tool press Alt/Opt and click on the photo to select your Foreground colour swatch. The text in the book isn't a perfect black, so it's worth checking with your image.

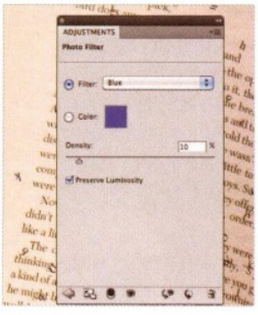
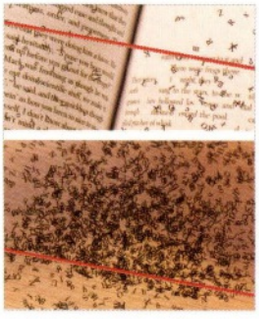


Photo Filter

Add a Photo Filter adjustment layer and set it to Blue with 10% Density. This changes the image to a cool tone to remove the orange tint. It will create a sense of unity as well.

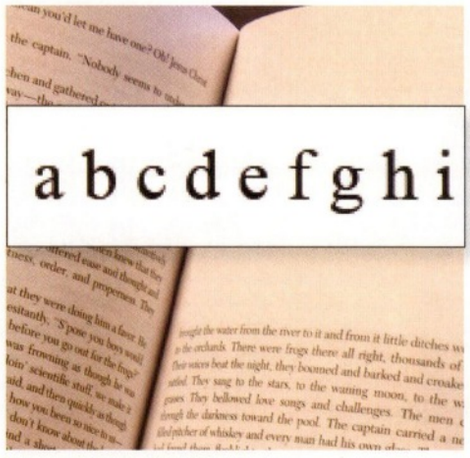
Darken the background

The background area is not a vital part of this image. Darken it using the Burn tool set to Midtones and 40% Exposure so it doesn't distract the viewer's eye.



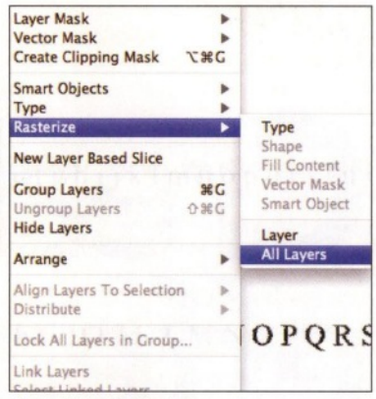
Straight edge

To match the position of the letters on the table, use the Line tool to mark the straight edge of the table in the image. Move this line over the text for accuracy of perspective.



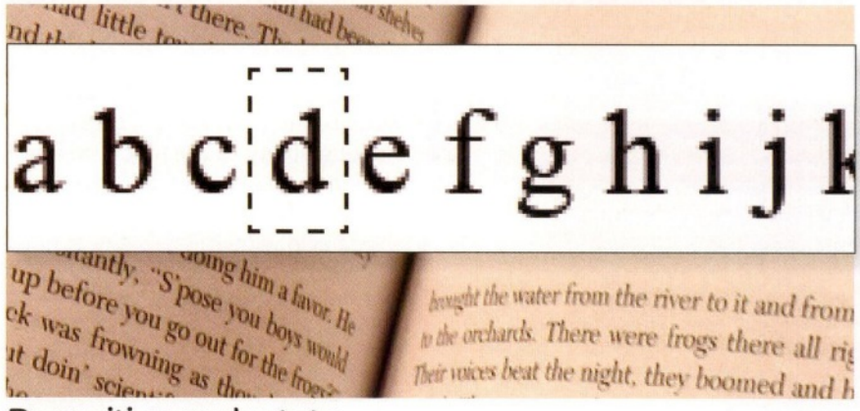
Type the alphabet

03 Press D to reset the Foreground colour to black and then click once on the canvas to activate the cursor. Type the entire alphabet in lower case on one line with a space between each letter.



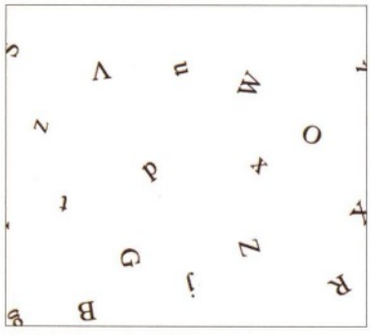
Rasterise type

04 Repeat this on a new line but use all capitals. Once complete, rasterise the type layers by going to the Layer menu and to Rasterize>All Layers. We need to start separating letters randomly, so select the Rectangular Marquee.



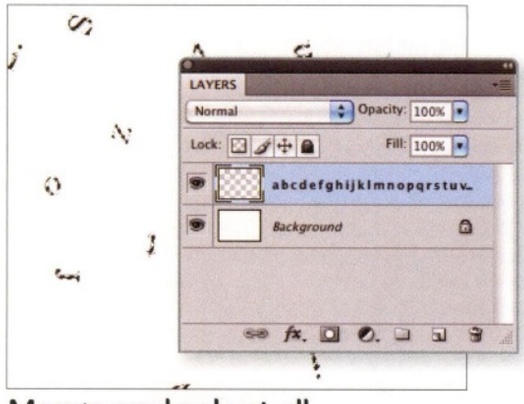
Reposition and rotate

05 Mark a rectangular selection around one of the letters. Press V to select the Move tool and reposition the letter anywhere on the canvas. Before removing the selection, press Ctrl/Cmd+T to activate the Free Transform tool. Rotate the letter to a new angle and hit Enter to set its position.



Scattering letters

06 Repeat this process of selecting, moving and rotating for each letter. Use the whole canvas and mix up the capital and lower case letters. Use the tool shortcuts, such as V and M, to speed up this process.



Merge and select all

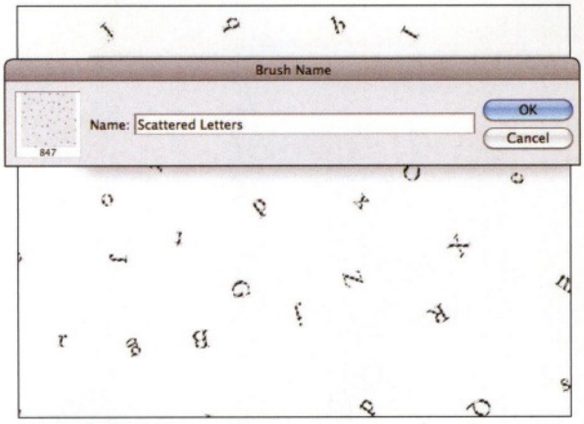
07 Once all the letters have been scattered around the canvas, select the top layer and press Ctrl/Cmd+E to merge them onto one layer. To highlight all of the letters, Ctrl/Cmd-click on the thumbnail.

Expert tip

Cloning made easy

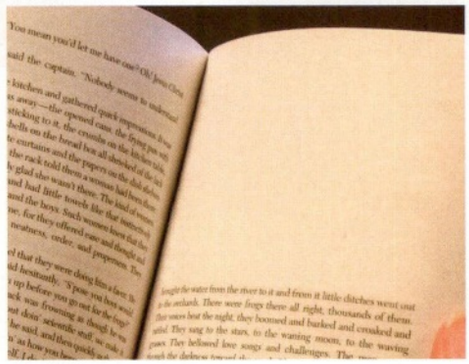
You can paint with the Clone Stamp tool to quickly remove entire lines of text at once. This is extremely useful when it comes to removing large chunks of the words from the original book photograph.

The tool looks at the pixels ahead from the point first clicked, so it's important when painting that there are enough good pixels that flow in the same direction. On something like our evenly toned page this should be relatively easy.



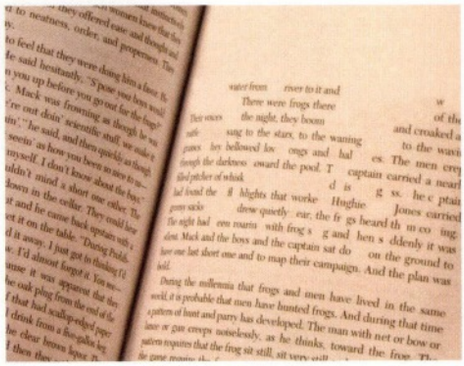
Make the brush

08 To turn the active selection into a new brush tip go to Edit>Define Brush Preset. Name the brush and hit OK. Close this document and open up the image of the book from your free disc.



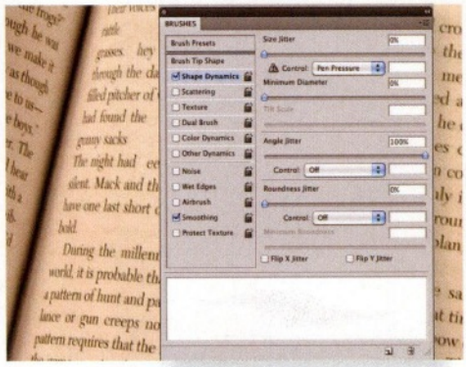
As if by magic

09 In the book image, duplicate the Background layer. Select the Clone Stamp tool and set it to 50% Hardness and 100% Opacity. Start with the right page and Alt/Opt-click on the top margin. Now simply brush over the letters to remove them.



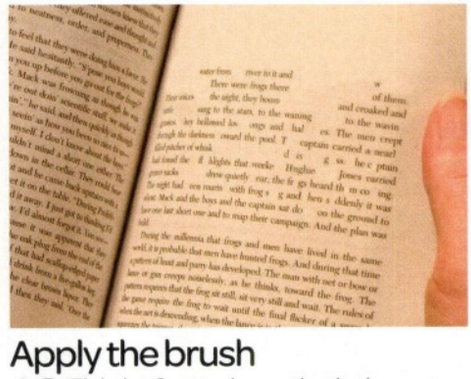
Break up words

10 Begin to remove individual words from the page using the Clone Stamp tool. By lowering the size of the brush, letters can be removed one by one from the page. Be careful where you sample and try to match brightness; the middle of the page is darker.



Brush dynamics

11 Select the Brush tool and set your Foreground colour to brown (#0b0900). Go to Windows>Brushes and choose the brush tip you made earlier. In Shape Dynamics set everything to 0% apart from Angle Jitter, which needs to be 100%.

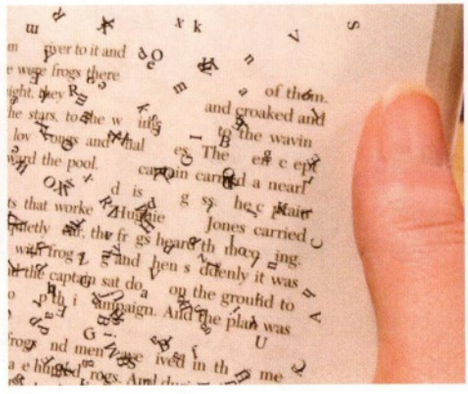


Apply the brush

12 Tick the Scattering option in the Brushes palette and then tick Both Axes. Set Scatter to 50% and make sure Smoothing is checked. Create a new layer and paint the letters over the page and onto the tabletop. Don't worry if some of the letters fall over the hand.

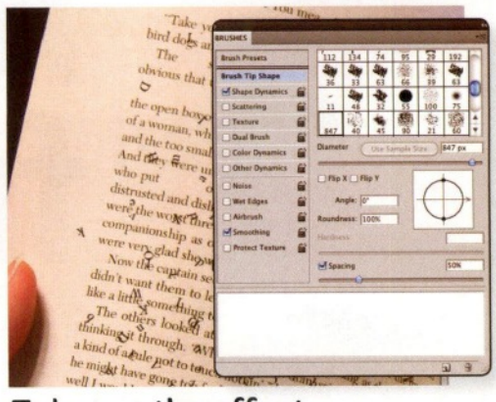
More letters

13 To create a heavier concentration of letters on the tabletop, increase the Count slider in the Brushes palette to 10 and reduce Scatter amount to 25%. Apply letters to the table clumped together. Two or three clicks should be just the right amount.



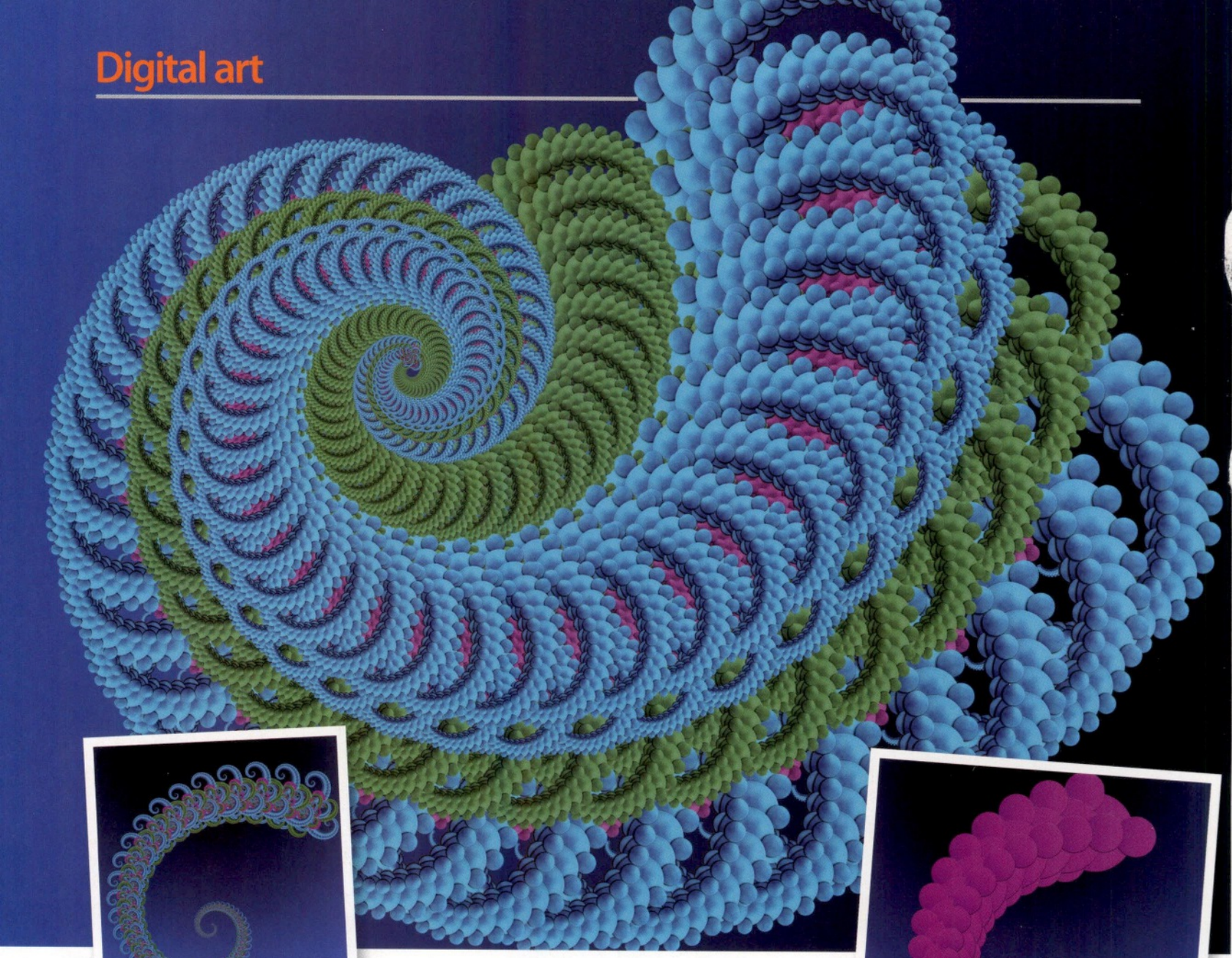
Erase overflow

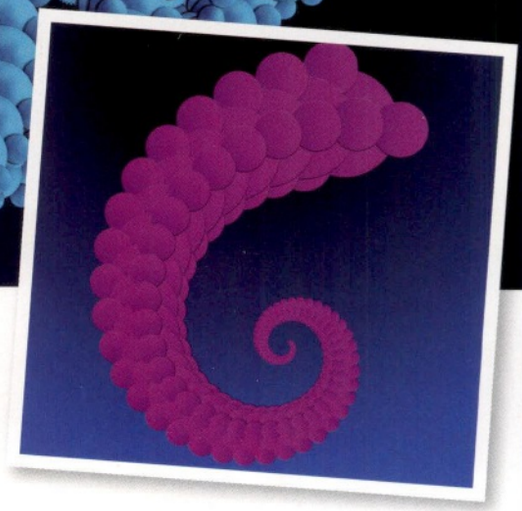
14 Some letters will fall over the hand and forearm, as well as spilling too far across the table. Use a solid Eraser with the same Diameter as the letters and remove any that are overflowing. Keep fewer letters at the top of the page than at the bottom.



Enhance the effect

15 Use the Clone Stamp tool in the left page of the book to remove blocks of text. Pick the Brush tool but this time untick the Scattering option and increase Spacing under Brush Tip Shape to 50%. Add letters to this page to finish the composition.





Make a fractal image

These geometric designs are usually created with special software but you can achieve the look in Photoshop

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

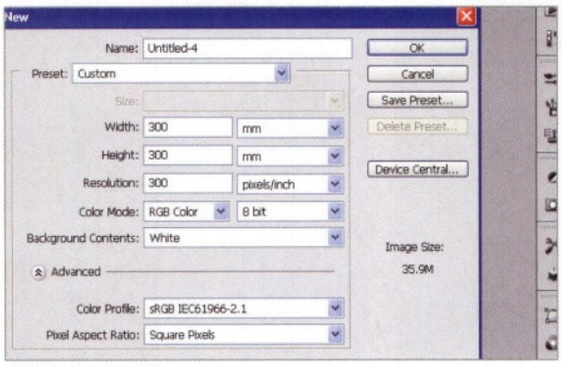
What you'll learn

How to create an abstract fractal design using a combination of the Shape and Transform tools, actions and the Hue/Saturation command

Time taken

20 minutes

We can do many things with Photoshop; photomanipulation is one aspect of it but we can also create original art. Fractal images are normally created using special software such as XaoS or XenoDream, but using a couple of simple tools and a little time and patience, we can create our own fractals from scratch. We start by creating a simple shape (we chose circles, but any shape can be used). We then copy, shift, rotate and resize the shape object many times until we have an initial fractal image. This is then copied, resized and rotated again to create a new shape. Follow these steps and get creative to produce your own inventive designs.

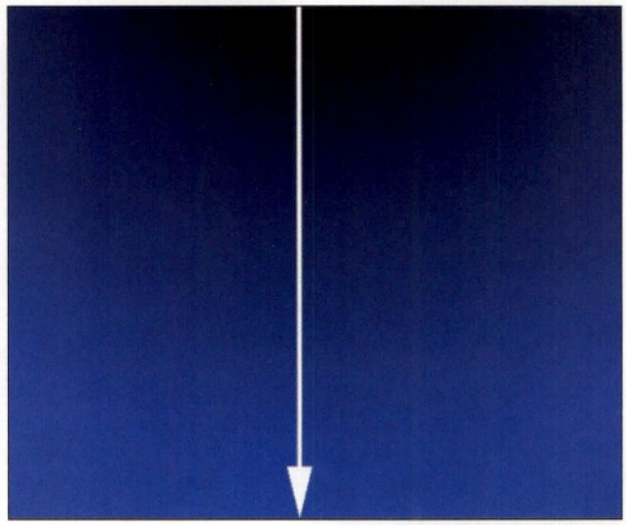


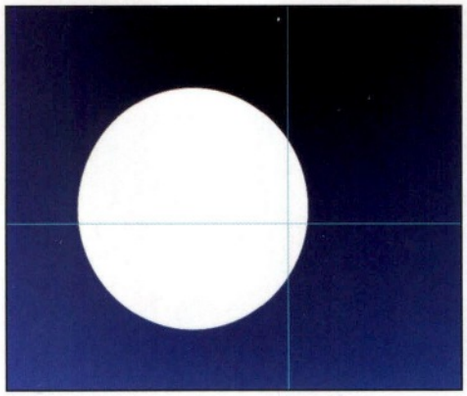
Set the scene

01 We start by creating a 300mm x 300mm Photoshop document (File>New), but if you want to use this as wallpaper for your computer then feel free to set your own dimensions.

Background gradient

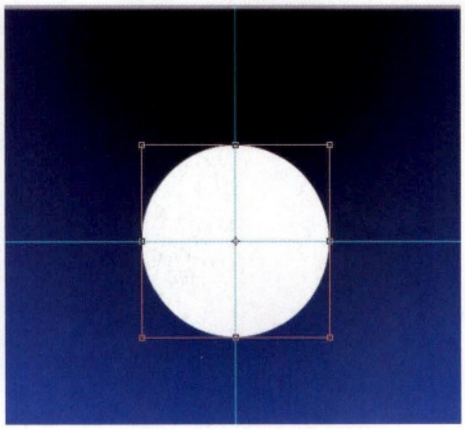
02 To create a background for our project, select the Gradient tool set to Radial then change the Foreground colour to blue (#0072bc) and the background to black (#000000). Pull out a gradient from the top of the document to the bottom.





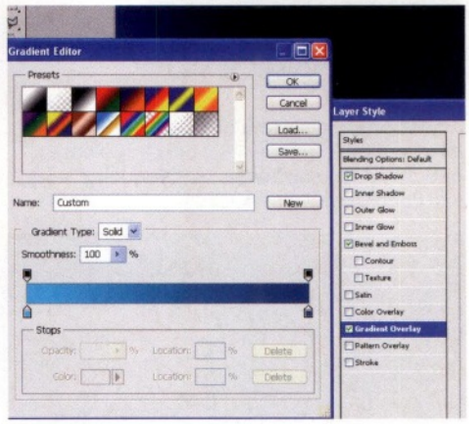
First circle

03 The fractal image we are going to build is constructed of a few circles. First press D on your keyboard to reset the colour swatches then select the Ellipse tool and, while holding the Shift key, draw out a large circle. At this point you can create a guide if you wish.



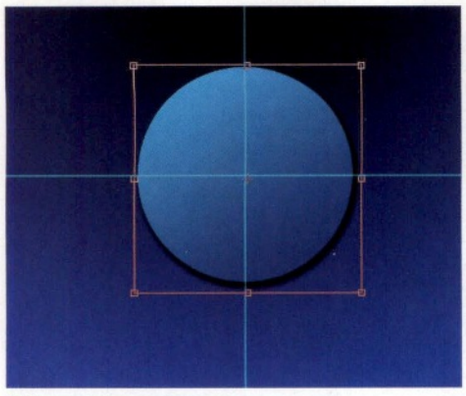
Layer styles

04 If you have created guides you can now place the circle where they intersect. Select the Drop Shadow layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow) set Distance to 30, Spread to 22 and Size to 43. Next add a Bevel and Emboss layer style.



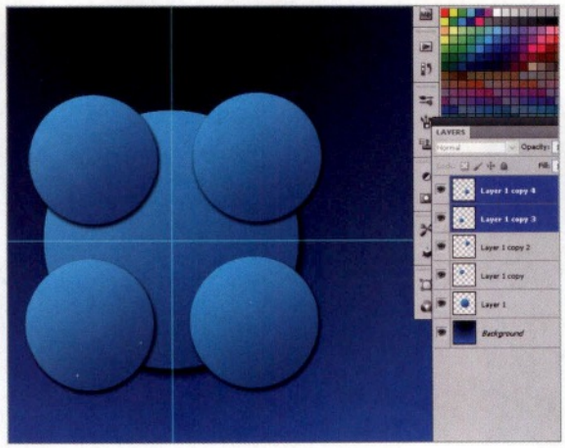
Gradient Overlay

05 Finally add a Gradient Overlay with the Angle set to -21 degrees. We want to pick the gradient's colours so do this by clicking the Gradient Editor. The first colour is set to a light blue (#1ebde5) and the last to a dark blue (#055080).



Merge and copy

06 Make a new layer under the circle, move back to the circle layer and press Ctrl/Cmd+E. This will merge the shape layer, the blank layer and the adjustments you made. Press Ctrl/Cmd+J to duplicate the circle shapes we just merged.



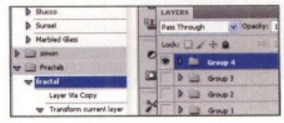
Arrange circles

07 Resize the circle so it is about a quarter of the original's size, then place the copied shape overlapping one corner of the circle. Repeat this three more times, one for each corner.

Expert tip

Action packed

It's possible to automate the fractal process using actions. Open the Actions palette via Window>Actions and make a new one called Fractal. While this is recording, repeat the actions from step 9 then press the Stop button. Playing the action will repeat the steps. If you don't want to make your own, use the one supplied on the disc!

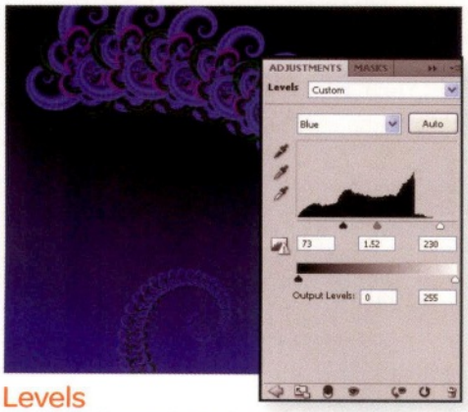


Change colours

In our project we want to change the colours of a fractal layer. We can do this in different ways, the easiest being to use adjustment layers. An adjustment to a layer cannot be altered at a later date but an adjustment layer can.

Hue/Saturation

Adjusting a colour with a Hue/Saturation layer is by far the easiest way. First tick the Colorize option and you can then move the Hue, Saturation and Lightness sliders.

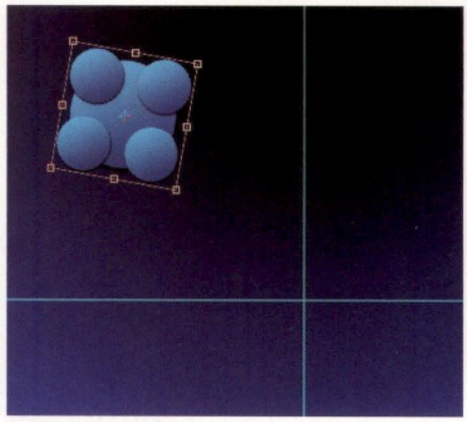


Levels

Levels can be used to adjust the red, green and blue hues independently of each other. By adjusting these values we can create any colour combination that we want.

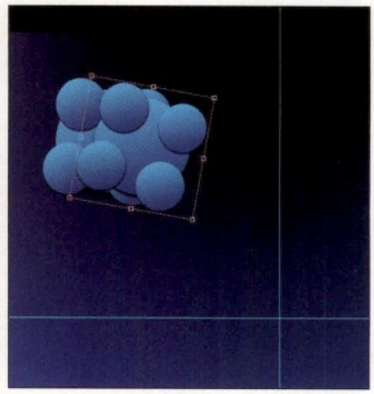
Color blending mode

By painting on a new layer with the Color blending mode we can brighten up our fractal. Clipping this layer to another means it only affects that one.



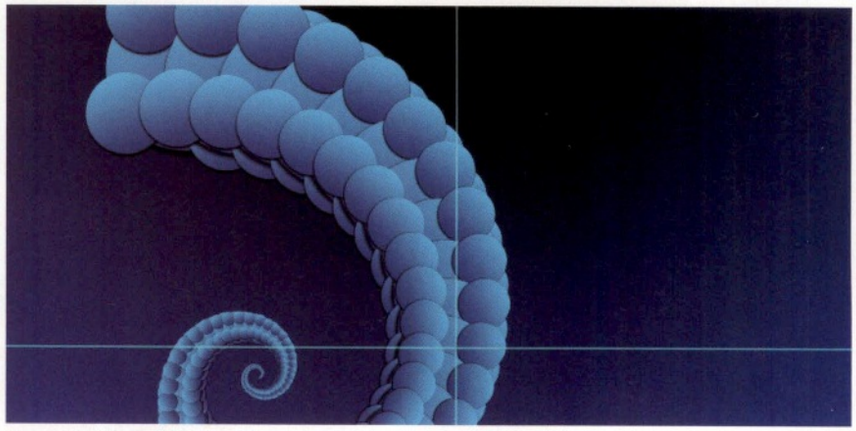
Merge and position

08 Merge all the circle layers together into one (Ctrl/Cmd+E) and rename this layer Fractal 1. Resize this shape so it's about a quarter of the size it was and move the top-left corner. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T and, in the Options bar, change the Angle to 10.



First duplicate

09 Duplicate the layer (Ctrl/Cmd+J) then use the Free Transform tool (Ctrl/Cmd+T) and move the transform centre left and away from the middle of the shape. Change the Angle to 10 degrees and the Size to 95%.

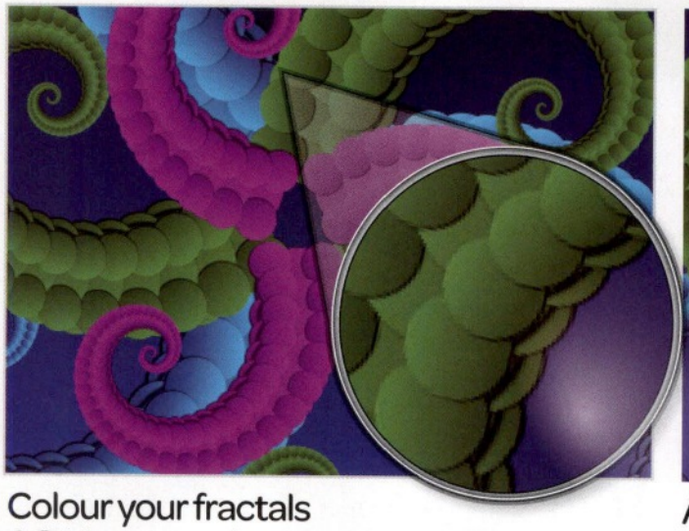


Create a pattern

10 With our first transformation completed, we simply have to repeat this again and again until we have a nice spiral. The easiest way of doing this is to create an action or keep pressing Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+T.

Extend the design

11 Merge all the fractal layers into one called Shape 1. Duplicate twice and arrange them into a triangle shape. Merge these again into one layer. We now want to duplicate this triangle, resize and angle over the top of Shape 1.



Colour your fractals

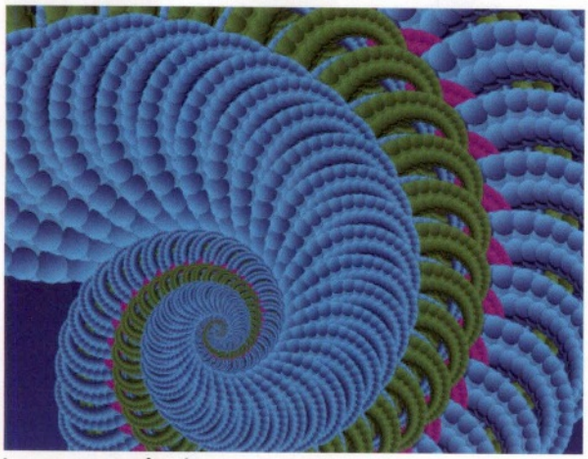
12 We want to recolour the new fractal layer we created, so copy the second triangle we just pasted and, as before, rotate and resize it, using adjustments to incorporate an emerald green and a deep purple colour.

Add detail and interest

13 We want to repeat this pattern a few times by selecting the three fractal layers and dragging them to the New Layer icon. Keep rotating and resizing the layers until the pattern is complete. When you are happy, merge all the fractal layers into a new one.

Resize and repeat

14 Resize the layer and move the fractal shape to the top left-hand side of the screen again. We now want to repeat step 9 and, using the layer we merged in step 13, create a new spiral.



Larger spirals

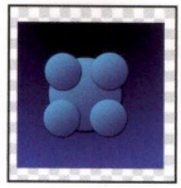
15 To make thicker and tighter spirals that look more like seashells, we simply have to leave the original layer as a fairly large shape. The smaller the start fractal the more open the resulting spiral will be.

How this image has been made

We look at the layers that build up to make this design

BACKGROUND
This is the background we created for our project made from a simple radial gradient.

FIRST CIRCLE
The first circle we created for the project, adding Drop Shadow and Bevel and Emboss layer styles.



FIVE CIRCLES
For our fractal shape we created a large circle with four other circles surrounding it.

FIRST FRACTAL
The first spiral we created consists of 90 layers all together.

THREE SPIRALS
We duplicated the spiral twice and arranged it in a triangle pattern.

REPEATING PATTERN
We copied the triangle pattern then stacked and coloured them.

FINAL SPIRAL
Finally we created a new spiral using the fractal pattern from earlier, with the same original technique to create a more detailed design.

Create a simple graffiti effect

Four steps to transform an ordinary photo into street art

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

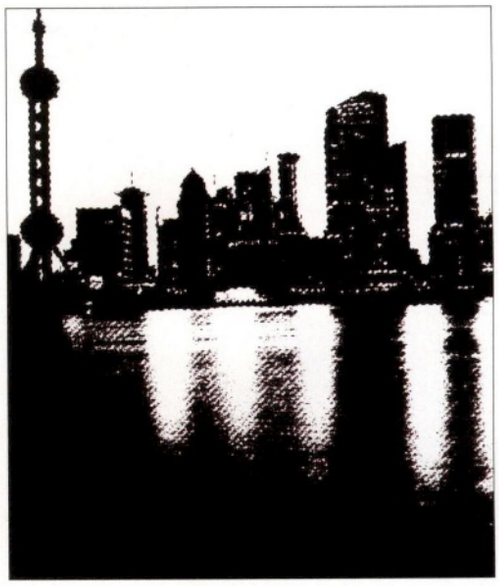
Get a quick graffiti effect using Threshold, layer masks, brushes and layer styles

Time taken

20 minutes

In this simple tutorial we will be looking into how we can create a graffiti effect from a photo. We start by creating the stencil look using the Threshold adjustment, then isolating the black parts of the image using the Color Range tool. We paste the stencil onto an image of a wall. We chose one from **www.morguefile.com/archive/display/1391**, but any wall will work.

Finally we used an Outer Glow layer style to give the city image a white background and a brush from **Brusheezy.com** to add some splats and drips to give an added dimension of realism to the whole image.

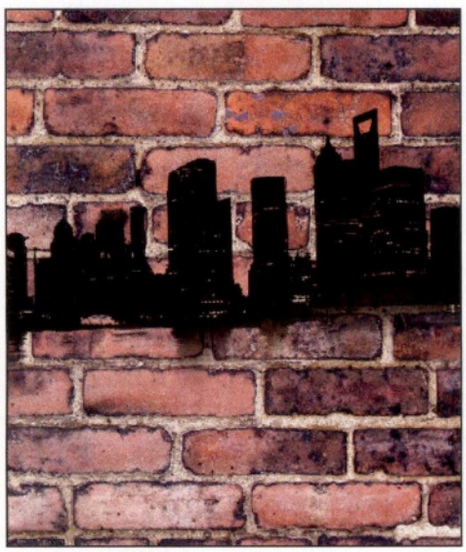


Behold Threshold

01 First we want to open the start image in Photoshop. To make this picture black and white, we use the Threshold adjustment (Image>Adjustments>Threshold) and set our Level at 128. Now select Color Range (Select> Color Range), set Fuzziness to 40 and click on the black buildings to select them all.

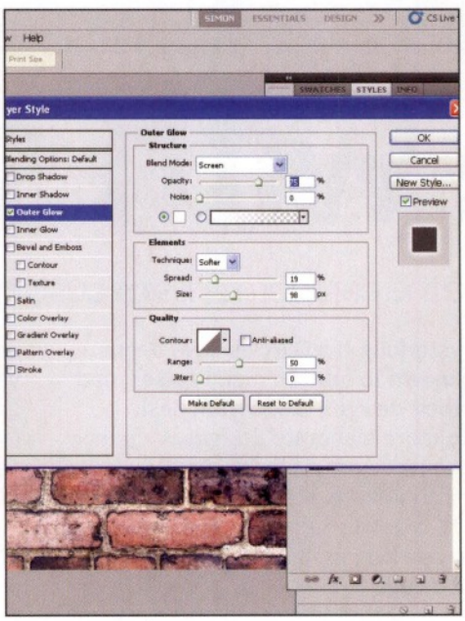
Create a simple graffiti effect

PHOTOSHOP CS5 AND ABOVE & ELEMENTS 10 | **WORKS WITH**



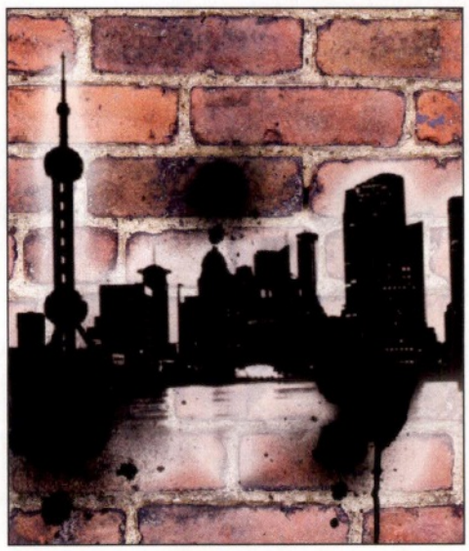
Layer mask

02 Copy (Edit>Copy) and paste it (Edit>Paste) on the wall picture and resize the image using the Free Transform command (Edit>Free Transform). We now add a Reveal All layer mask (Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All) and, using a black soft-edged brush, mask away the water and hard edges of the selection.



Layer styles

03 To make the city image pop, we are going to add a white outline to the silhouette. Apply an Outer Glow layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow>) set the Colour to white (#ffffff), set Technique to Softer, increase Size to 98 and Spread to 19.



Splats and drips

04 Next we want to blur our city image slightly so select the city layer, followed by Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur at 2px. We then use a downloaded brush (just go to **www.brusheezy.com/brushes/1371-hi-res-spraypaint-photoshop-brushes-set-one** to download it for free) to brush on some splats and paint runs.

Create with shapes

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Essential techniques for using custom shapes, layer styles, groups, blend modes and the Brush tool

Time taken

3 hours

Create the paranormal using custom shapes and layer styles

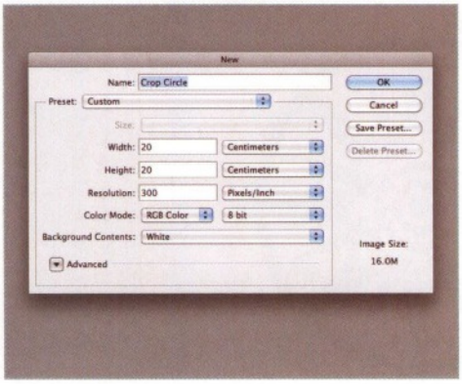
Mysterious crop circles have been known to take on many guises, and their designs range from basic shapes to more elaborate designs. Whether you believe these are methods of communication from extra-terrestrial life or just pranks to annoy farmers, you can create a realistic crop circle using Photoshop and any picture of a field!

Using the Custom Shape tool you can pick one of the preset shapes to start off the design. Working with other shapes available under the numerous categories, you can extend, combine and add detail to the crop circle's design for a unique look.

Grouping layers enables you to easily transport the crop circle over to the main image. If you're using Photoshop CS6, then you'll be able to apply layer styles directly to a group, rather than reapplying the style one layer at a time. Even if you've got an earlier version of Photoshop, we will show you how to apply layer styles in a more efficient way.

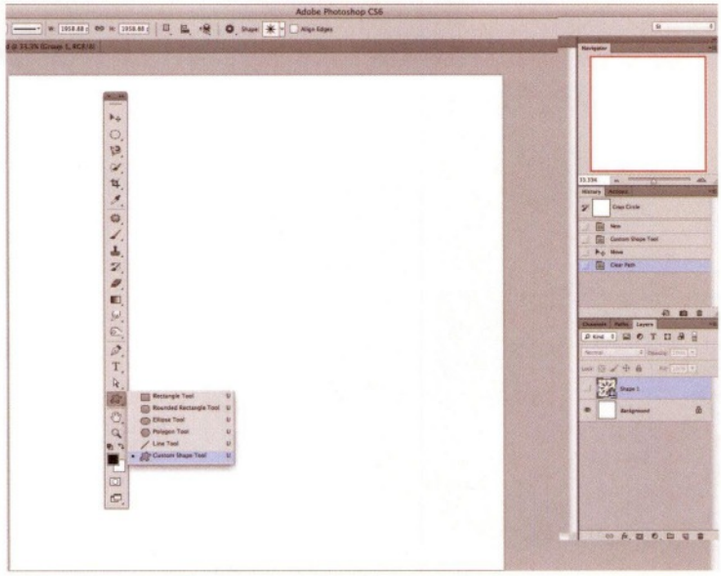
In the resources pack on the disc at the back of the book you'll find the landscape image used here (courtesy of Colin Brough **www.rgbstock.com/user/colinbrough**). The crop circle shape is also in there, so you can jump straight into creating the composition if you're pressed for time.

We've added in a UFO in the closing stages just for some fun with Brush tool. Check out the additional ideas for crop-circle designs at the end of this tutorial.



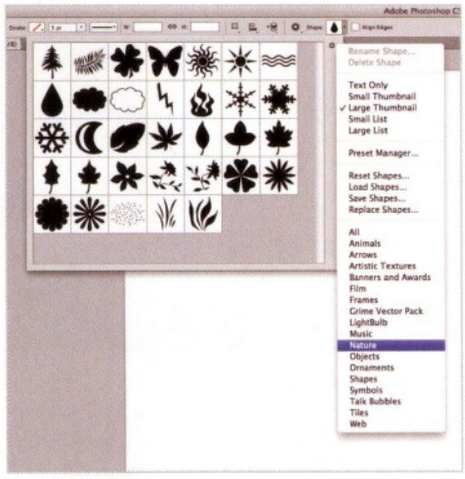
New file

01 The first part of this image is to make the crop circle in a separate document. Press Cmd/Ctrl+N to start a new file. Call this new document Crop Circle and make it 20 x 20cm at 300ppi. Press OK.



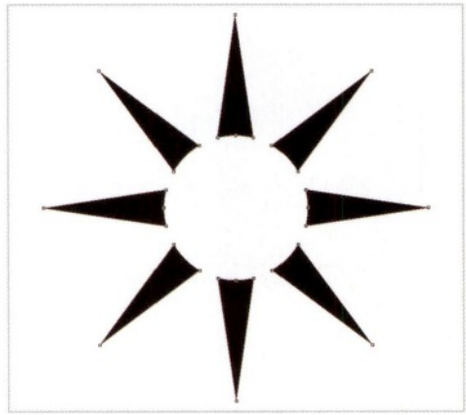
Choose tool

02 We can design the crop circle using Photoshop's preset shapes. We've supplied this shape with the tutorial's resources ('Crop Circle.psd'), but if you want to make this from scratch, select the Custom Shape tool (U) and press D to set your colour swatches to black and white.



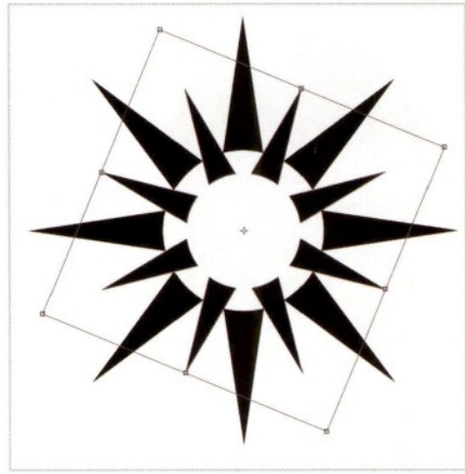
Load shape

03 In the Options bar, select Shape from the three available modes (Pixels and Path are the other two). Load the Nature set by clicking on the drop-down menu inside Shape. Hit OK and select Sun 2 from the group that loads up.



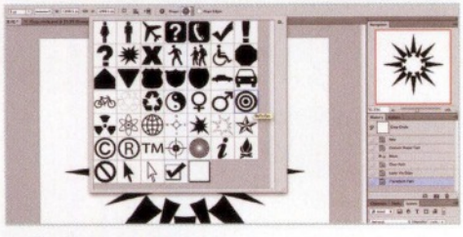
Edit shape

04 Holding Shift, drag the shape onto the canvas. The shape should appear as a new layer. Remove the middle part using the Direct Selection tool (A), holding Shift to select the four points forming its area (be sure to click on the very edge of the shape to see these). Press Backspace to remove the area.



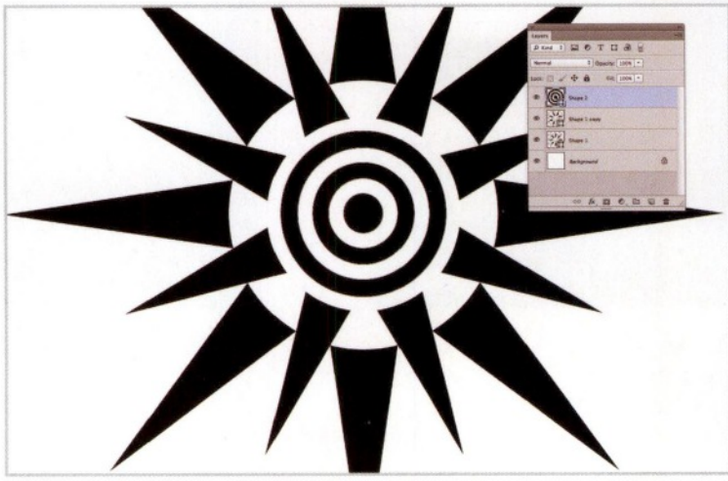
Custom design

05 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to create a direct duplicate of the shape's layer. Now go to Edit>Free Transform and, in the Options bar, enter 22.5 in the Rotate field. To shrink the shape, hold Opt/Alt+Shift and drag one of the corner points inwards.



Hit the target

06 Go back to the Custom Shape tool and, in the Options, select the Symbols set. Choose the Bull's Eye shape from the new set of thumbnails that have loaded up. Now add a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) into the Layers palette before applying the shape to the design.



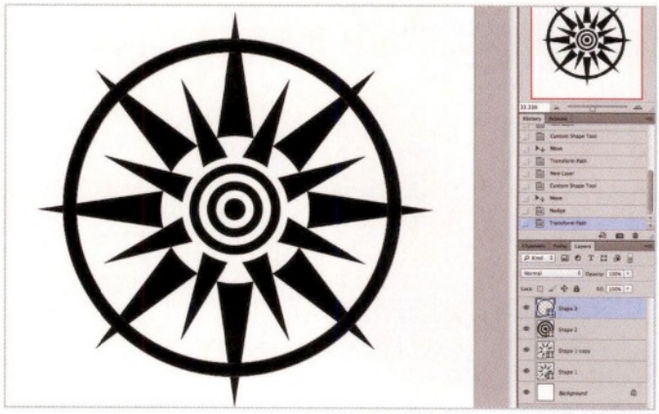
Nudge pixels

07 Hold Shift and drag the new shape to fit into the centre of the crop circle's design. To reposition the shape at any stage, press V for the Move tool. Use the arrow keys to nudge the shape pixel by pixel until it's centred.

Expert tip

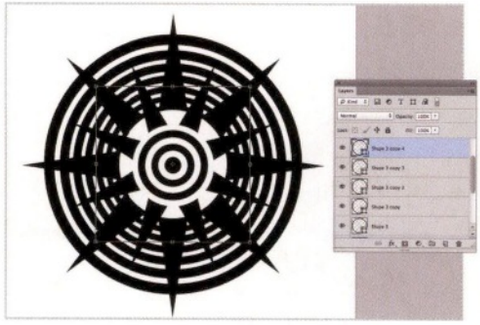
How to edit a path

When the crop circle is transferred onto the field image, it's still an editable shape. This is a good opportunity to adjust parts of the design before rasterising all the layers in the group. Pick the Direct Selection tool and click on the very edge of a shape to show the editable path. Use the points along the path to bend its shape to help position and angle the crop circle on the field with the right perspective.



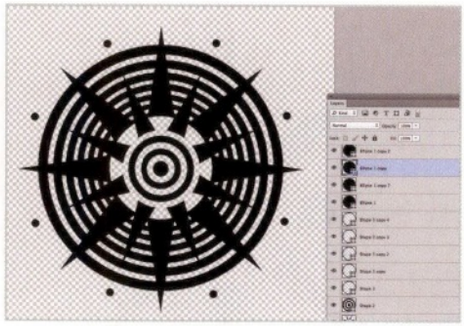
Modify further

08 Grab the Custom Shape tool again, load the Shapes set from the Options bar and select the Circle Thin Frame. Create a new layer and then apply the shape to the design. Make this the largest ring, fitting around the outer edge.



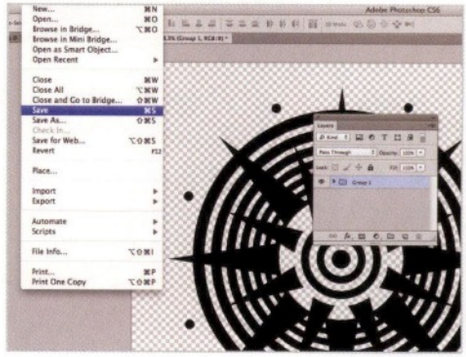
Additional rings

09 To add more rings to the design, duplicate the largest ring's layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Hold Opt/Alt+Shift to resize from the centre so that it's slightly smaller than the one before. Continue this process of duplicating and resizing the ring until you reach the middle of the crop circle.



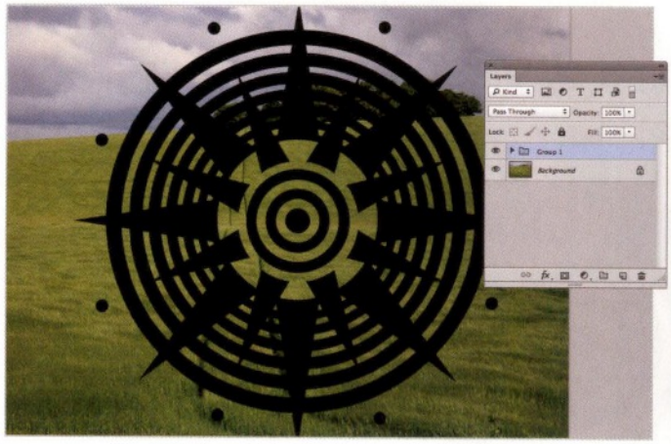
Complete the design

10 There's nothing stopping you taking the design of your crop circle further. For this one, we've added dots around the outside edge using the Ellipse tool (U). When you're done, drag the Background layer onto the trashcan symbol in the Layers palette to remove the white areas.



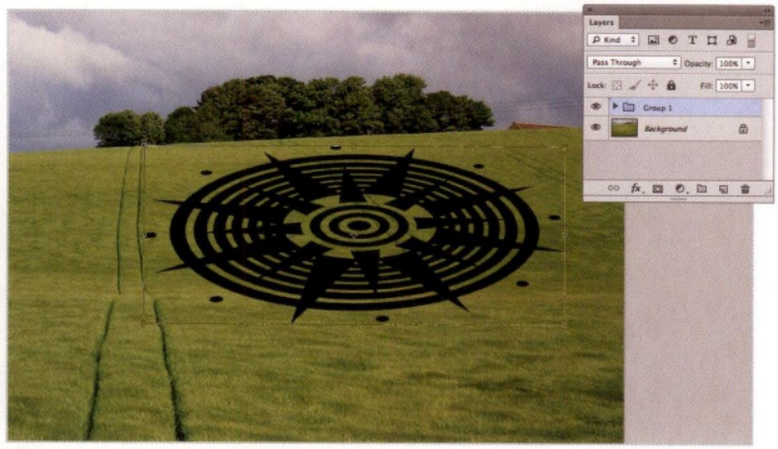
New group

11 Click on the bottom layer in the palette and then Shift-click on the top layer to select all. Press Cmd/Ctrl+G to place all of these into a new group. Now is a good time to save this crop circle as a PSD. Open 'Field.jpg' from the supplied images.



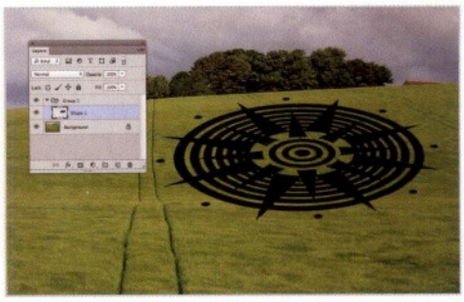
Transfer group

12 In the crop circle document, Ctrl/right-click on the word Group and select Duplicate Group from the list of options. In the pop-up box, change Document to Field and hit OK. Go back to the field image to see the crop circle on top.



Transform crop circle

13 With the group layer highlighted, go to Edit>Free Transform and shrink down the crop circle to fit over the hillside in the distance. Now go to Edit>Transform>Distort to bend and add perspective to the crop circle. Make it look as though it's level with the sloping field.

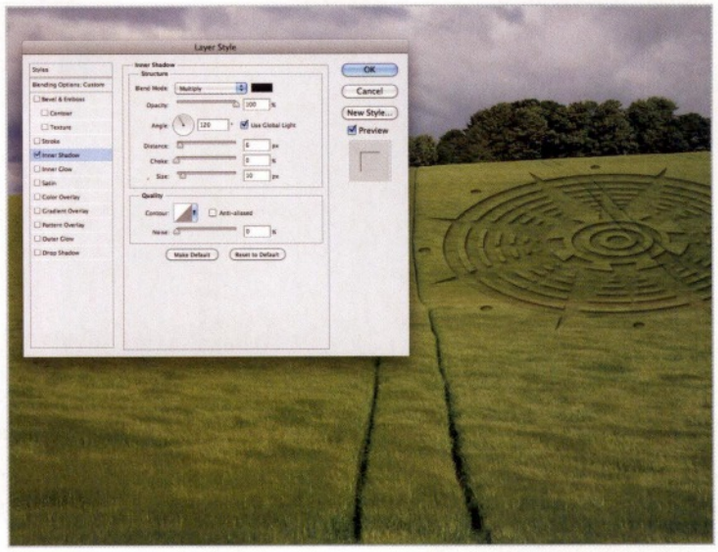


Rasterise layers

14 Once you're happy with the position of the crop circle, go to Layer> Rasterize>All Layers. This turns all of the shapes into normal, editable ones. Click on the top layer inside the group and press Cmd/Ctrl+E multiple times until all the layers have been merged into a single one.

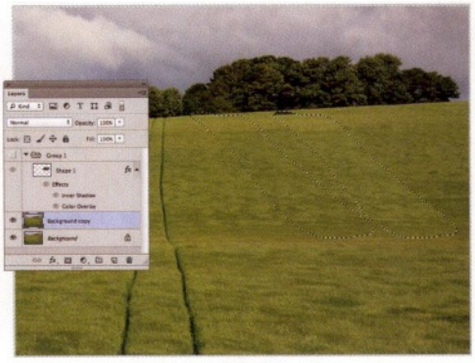
Blend in

15 Change the blend mode of this layer to Soft Light, setting its Opacity to 60% and Fill to 40%. The crop circle should blend into the grass. Double-click on the layer to open the Layer Style menu. Add a black Inner Shadow, setting it to Multiply mode, Opacity 100%, Angle 120, Distance 6px and Size 10px.



Color Overlay

16 Still inside the Layer Style dialog, click on Color Overlay. Set its colour to a light green (#d6dd9b) and change its blend mode to Linear Light. Lower the Opacity of the Color Overlay layer down to 43% and hit OK. The crop circle should look even more a part of the landscape now.

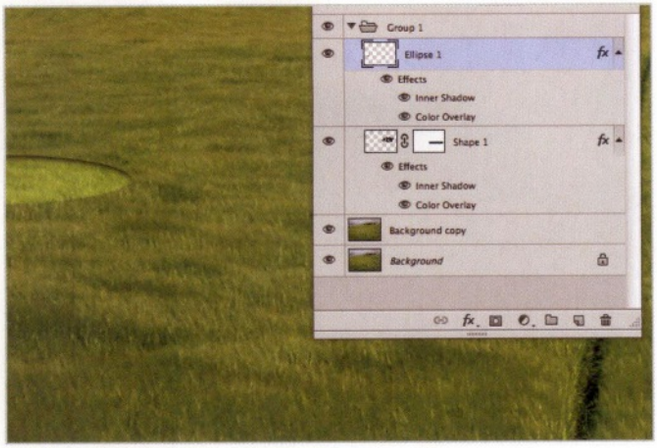


Patch up the field

17 Hide the group by clicking on the eye symbol next to it in the Layers palette. If the crop circle is lying over the tractor's path, select the Background layer and duplicate it. Select the Patch tool (J), draw around the lines on the field and drag the selection next to this to remove the path.

Hide behind the hill

18 Where there's a dip in the hill, we need to hide the edge of the circle. Reveal the group by clicking back on its eye and then add a layer mask to its layer. Select the Brush tool (B), setting it to 60% Hardness and 150px Size. Now paint over the front part of the crop circle to hide it.



More circles

19 To add the smaller circles, select the Ellipse tool. Draw an oval shape in the foreground and then rasterise it. Ctrl/right-click over the crop circle layer and click Copy Layer Style. Ctrl/right-click over the ellipse layer and click Paste Layer Style.

Expert tip

Extra shapes

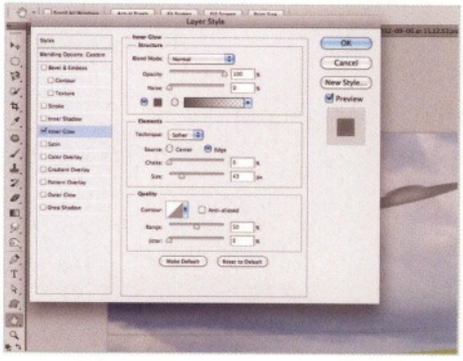
If you've found that the preset shapes shipped with Photoshop have worn thin, head to the web for more free ones. There are many resources that provide a mix of shapes. Websites such as deviantART **(www.deviantart.com)** are a great resource for providing artistic ones. **http://all-silhouettes.com** is dedicated to the art of the shape. Do a web search for crop-circle shapes and there are even ones especially for this purpose!

Soften the edges

20 The edges of the crop circles need to be blurred slightly to help them blend into the field. Use the Blur tool (R) set to 60% Strength and paint over the edges of the design. Start in the distance and then work your way towards the foreground, lowering the Strength value gradually as you go.

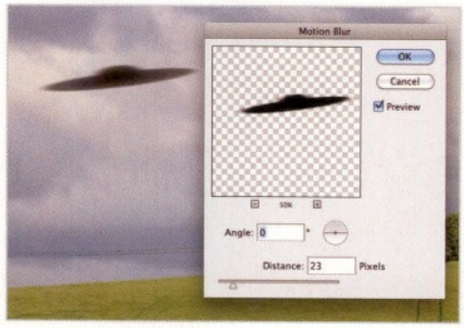
Create a UFO

21 Add a new layer to the top of the composition and use the Ellipse tool to create two oval shapes. One should be for the main body of the UFO and the second, smaller one for the central pod of the craft. Rasterise both layers and merge them together into one.



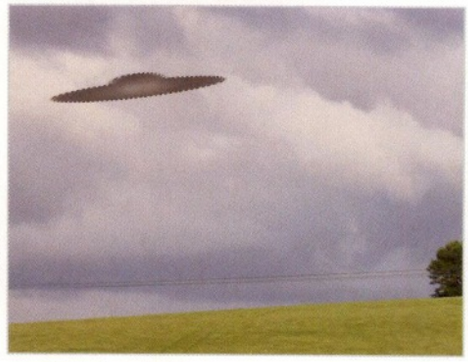
Inner Glow

22 Apply an Inner Glow layer style to this UFO layer. Set its colour to a mid grey (#6a6a6a), Opacity to 100% and Size to 35px. Set Technique to Softer and Source to Edge. Hit OK to apply the style to the shape.



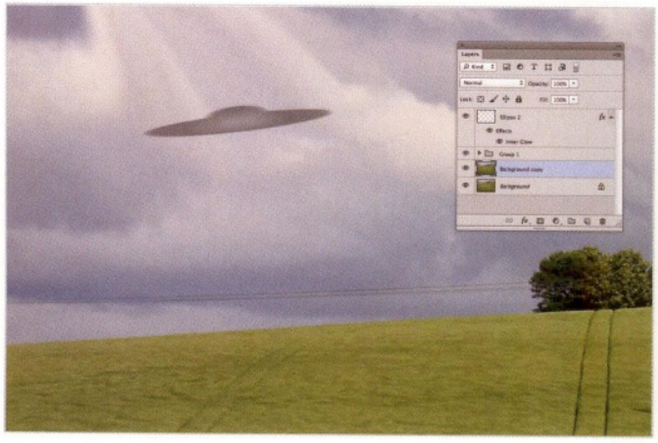
Motion Blur

23 To apply distortion to the UFO, go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set Distance to 23px and Angle to 0 degrees. Hit OK and rotate the layer to make it seem like it's flying through the sky. This also softens the edges of the shape to make it look as if it's moving.



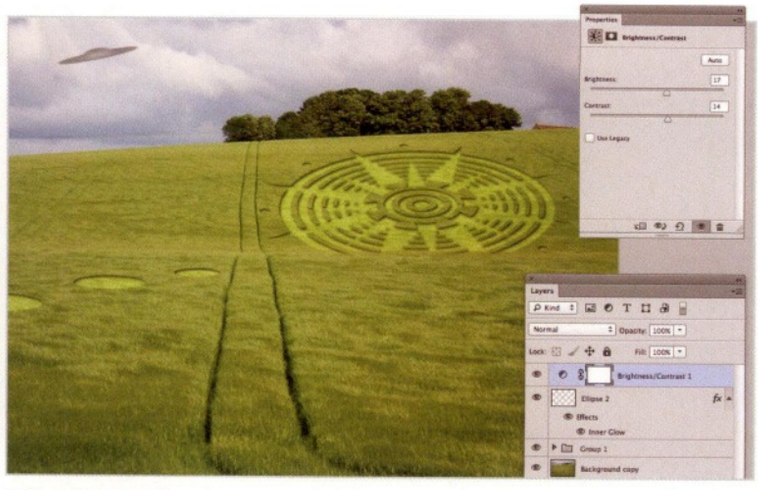
Add highlights

24 Cmd/Ctrl-click on the thumbnail of the UFO's layer to make it a selection and use the Brush tool set to white and a low opacity to add highlights. The selection will make sure paint only goes onto the UFO.



Smudge clouds

25 To blur the clouds around the UFO, select the Smudge tool (R). Set it to 60% Strength in the Options bar and make sure Sample All Layers is turned off. On the Background Copy layer, smudge the sky upwards using a brush at 150px.

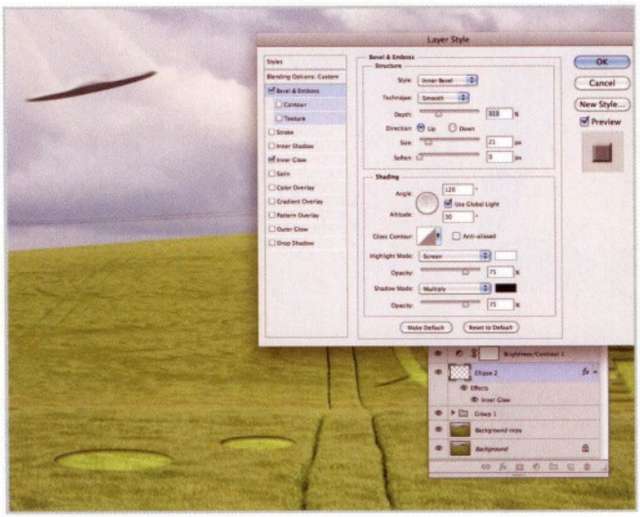


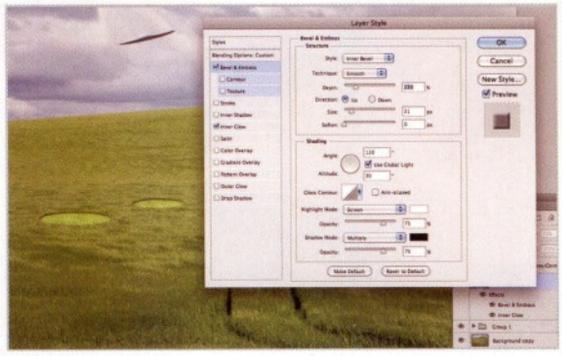
Final tweaks

26 Apply a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer to the top of the stack (Layer>New Adjustment Layer). Boost the Brightness slider to +17 and the Contrast slider to +14 to add impact to the image.

UFO lighting

27 In order to enhance the UFO further, add a Bevel and Emboss layer style. Set Depth to 230%, Style to Inner Bevel and Technique to Smooth. The Direction should be Up, with a Size of around 20px. Reduce the Soften value down to 0px.





Style shading

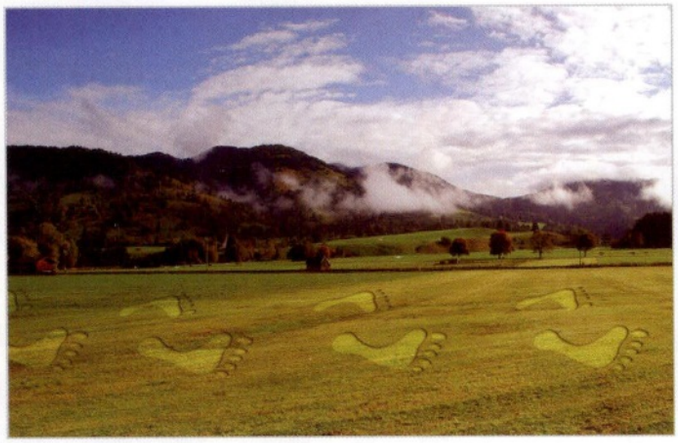
28 Under Shading in the Bevel & Emboss layer style, set the Highlight Mode to Screen and white for its colour. Shadow Mode should be set to Multiply with black. Both need to have 75% Opacity.

Explore additional designs

A look at some of the other shapes in Photoshop for varying the crop circle

Footprints

There are lots of shapes within Photoshop, giving you many ideas to play with. This one uses the human footprints under the Objects set. You can use the Distort function within Transform to place these on the ground.



Copyright the world

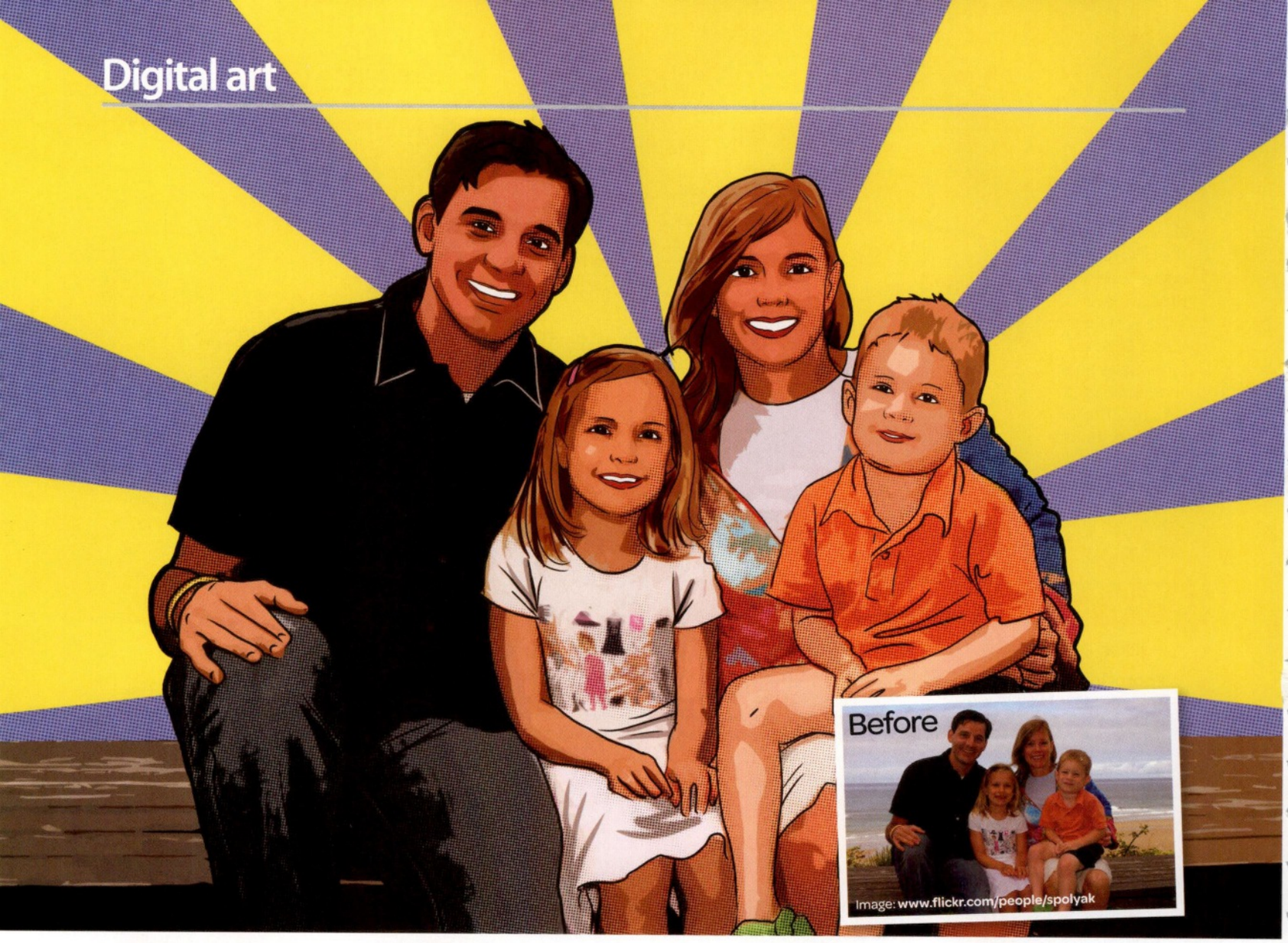
Using the Copyright shape under the Symbols set, you can copyright the planet! Perhaps not a traditional crop circle, but it's fun experimenting with designs and what the Custom Shape tool is capable of.

The atom

There's even the sign for the atom within Symbols, which, as a custom shape, can be enlarged to fit over huge areas without losing quality. It's only when you rasterise that things start to turn pixelated.

Floral design

The colour of the crop circle doesn't necessarily have to match the surroundings. Adapt the Color Overlay style for different effects and lower its opacity. This floral design is found in the Ornaments set.



Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to use a Cutout filter, brushwork, layer masks and adjustments

Time taken

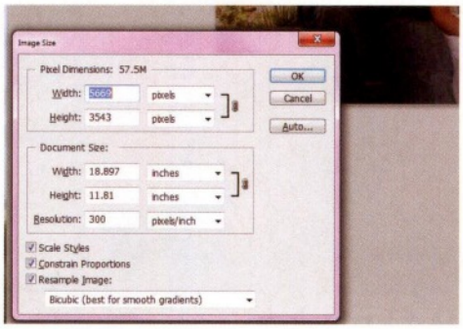
1 hour

Turn photos into artwork

Use filters and brushes to turn family photos into fun creations

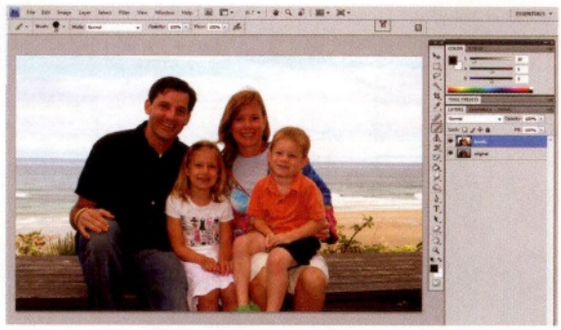
Turning your photos into cartoon artwork can be useful for a multitude of fun projects. This unique style of photo conversion could be a great way to preserve those special memories. Just imagine: scrapbooking, birthday cards, holiday postcards, online avatars, calendars – even that custom mug you've been wanting to design. These are just a few of the endless possibilities!

For this tutorial, all you will need to get started is a copy of Photoshop, a photo (which we've provided on your disc) and a little spare time. We'll guide you through the process of transforming an average-quality family photo into a fun cartoon style. We'll also empower you with the can-do and the know-how to help you apply these techniques to your own photos. Don't worry if your personal photos happen to be of unspectacular quality – we'll show you a few handy tricks to work around some common issues and help you turn your photos into creative works of art!



Set up

01 Open 'family portrait.jpg' or your own photo and use the Crop tool (C) to eliminate any unwanted parts of the image, if necessary, to improve the composition. Press Cmd/Ctrl+ Opt/Alt+I and adjust the document size to your chosen dimensions.



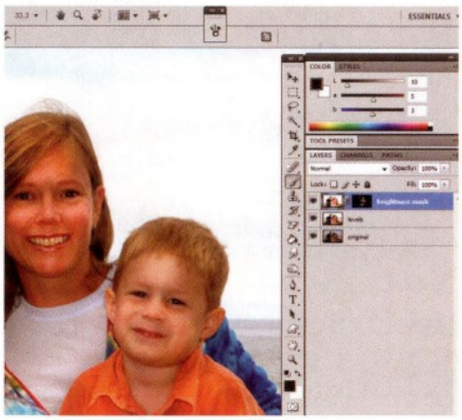
Make some adjustments

02 Duplicate the photo layer. Adjust the image by using Image>Auto Colour and Image>Auto Contrast. We'll also need to adjust the image further with Image>Adjustments>Levels – just move the sliders to create definition between the lights and shadows of the image, while maintaining a natural look.

Expert tip

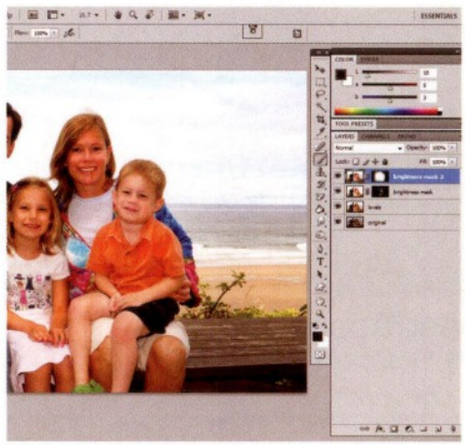
Adjustment Layers

Hue/Saturation, Levels and the Brightness/Contrast adjustments are great for enhancing photographs – whether for cartoon styling, portfolios or anything else. Use the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette to create a new layer that enables you to adjust settings. Masks can then be assigned to these to target problem areas without disrupting the main image.



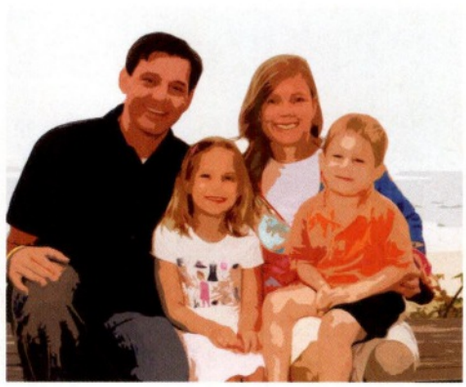
Mask for brightness

03 Duplicate this layer. Using the Levels again, adjust the settings so the image is even brighter and then mask it using Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All. Use an airbrush with a white colour over areas that receive more light to add variation to the midtones.



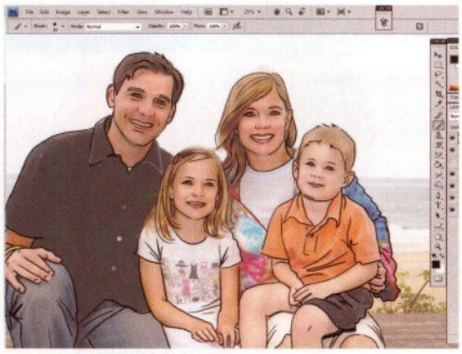
Prep for the fun

04 Now we'll repeat step 3 – except this time, we'll increase the brush size and apply over the figures instead. This extra contrast will be essential preparation for the filter we'll use in the follow step.



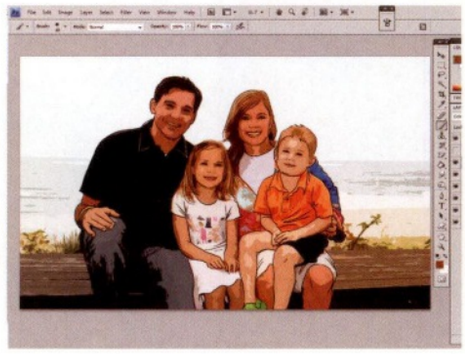
Use Cutout to cartoonify

05 Use Filter>Artistic>Cutout to simplify the colours and add that 'cartoony' effect. Adjust the sliders so that the edges are angular and only a few colours are used in each face. Don't worry about facial features that are missing or distorted – we'll fix that soon!



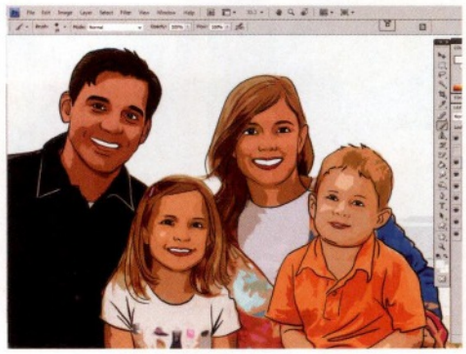
Trace the photo

06 Hide the Cutout layer. Make a new layer, fill with white and then lower its Opacity to 50%. On a new layer above, trace the photo by drawing in the lines with a small Hard brush. When complete, hide the white layer and make the cutout layer visible.



Tweak the colour

07 You may have noticed that many areas are not the colour that they should be. We'll fix that by creating a new layer and then setting the mode to Colour. Use a Hard Round brush and the Color Picker to tweak these areas.



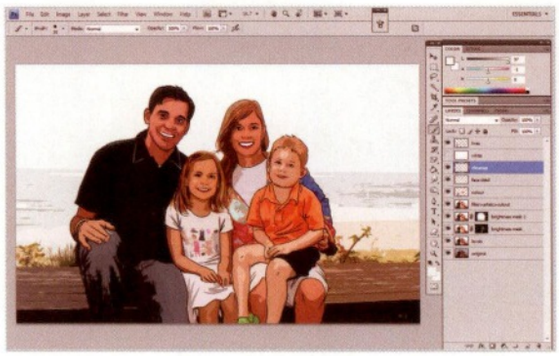
Detail the faces

08 Hit Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N to make a new layer, making sure that it is placed below the lines layer but above everything else. Use a Hard brush to paint in the face detail – white for the eyes and teeth, pinks and reds for the lips.

Expert tip

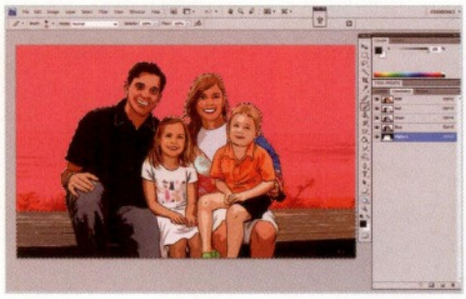
Scrapbook ideas

After you're all done, you may want to add your artwork to a scrapbook. To make the pages flow seamlessly together, try to balance the photo choices with a main theme. Organise pages by similar and reoccurring colours and patterns – this will create unity. Additional graphics and decorations will make the pages more appealing and emphasise the artworks, creating harmony.



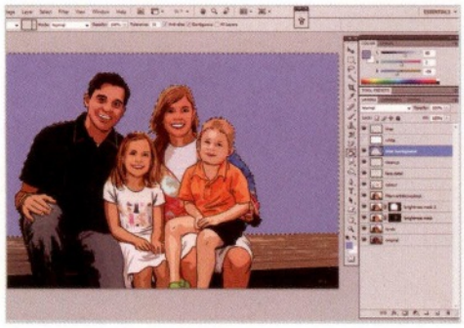
Clean up

09 On the face detail layer (or on a new layer above it), have a look at where you need to clean up areas where colours are escaping the lines. Some of the colour edges may need simplifying.



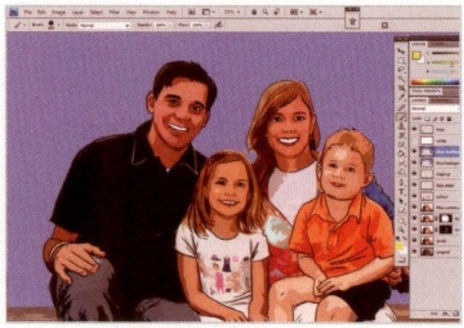
Put a mask on

10 Use Quick Mask Mode or make a new channel in the Channels palette (which we have used) to mask out the background in a transparent red. We'll use the Selection tools and a Hard Round brush to colour the foreground white.



Select the background

11 If using channels, select the background by clicking on Load Channel as Selection. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I to inverse the selection (for Quick Mask, press Q). Back in the Layers palette, fill the selection on a new layer with blue.

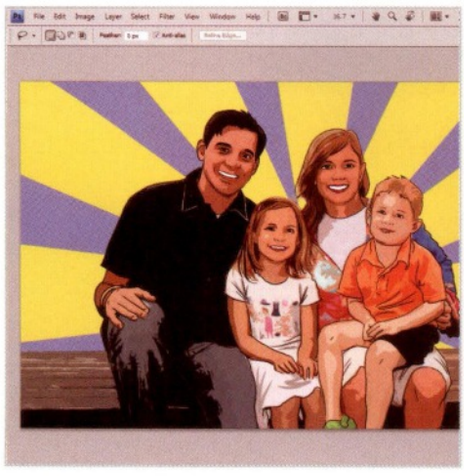


Add a pattern

12 Now it's time to give that flat, blue background some life by using a pattern. Duplicate the layer and use Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone, setting the Max Radius and all four channels to 8. Adjust the layer's Opacity slider to your preference.

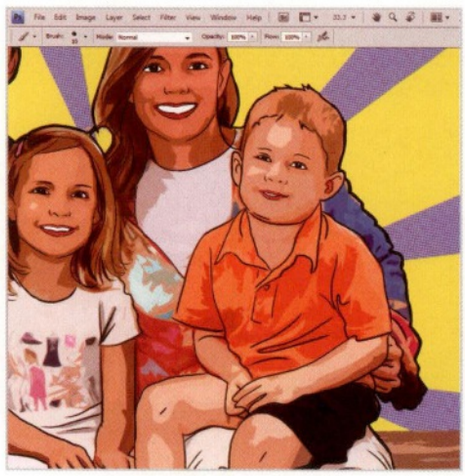
Use custom shapes

13 Create a new layer and grab the Custom Shape tool. You can use any shape, but here we've used the Flower 7 preset from the Nature collection. Make the shape and then use Cmd/Ctrl+T to increase the size of the shape.



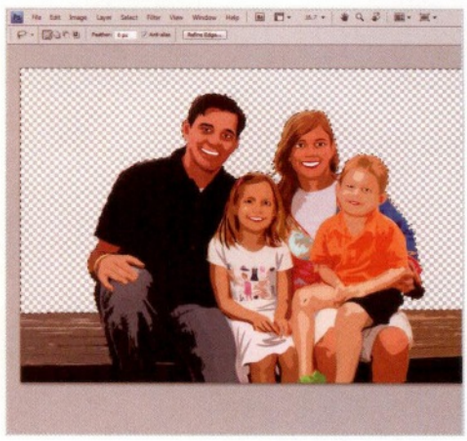
Delete the excess

14 Remember the channel (or Quick Mask selection) that we made a few steps back? Go back and select it again. Back in the Layers palette, press Delete to cut out the selected part of the shape, revealing the figures.



Dramatise the edges

15 Now we'll go back to the layer that we made with the traced lines. Using a slightly bigger brush than before, sweep across the outer edges of the figures to give them a bold 'pop' effect that will lift them from the background.

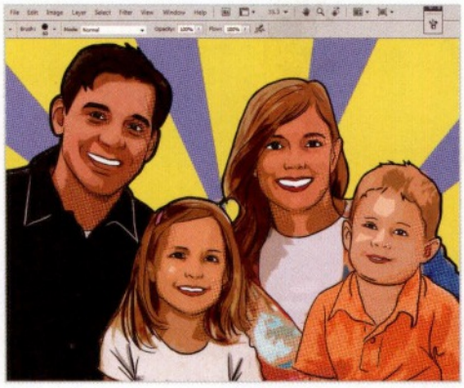


Create a foreground layer

16 Hide the lines layer and then press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to merge all visible layers onto a new layer. Cmd/Ctrl-click on the blue background layer to get a selection of the background, then head back to the merged layer and press Delete. Now make the lines visible again.

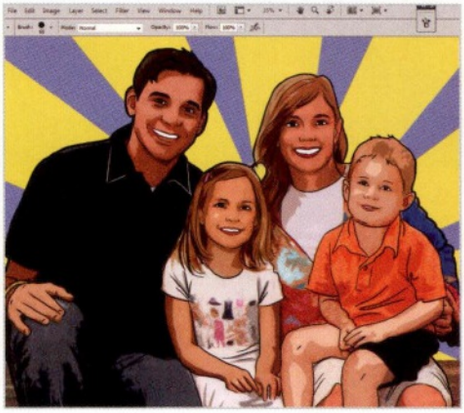
Make halftone with filter

17 Add the halftone effect by using Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone with each setting at 8, as we did for the blue background. After that, create a mask via the Add Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette.



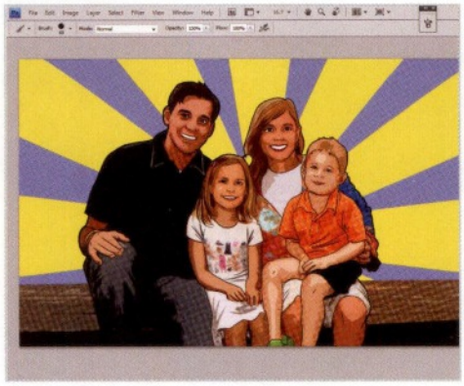
Mask out unwanted areas

18 Using an Airbrush with a black colour, brush over the more highlighted areas of the image, leaving the shadowy areas in the halftone. You could also eliminate the halftone completely on some elements (such as the hair, for example) to add variation and more interest.



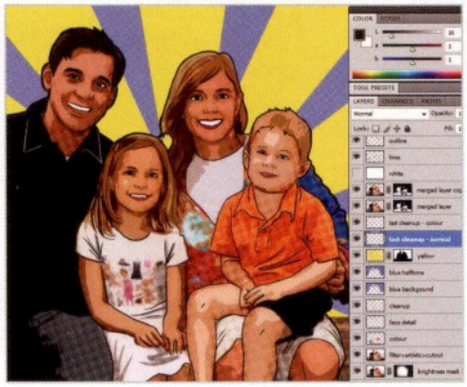
Enhance the halftone

19 Move the Opacity slider down to make the halftone semi-transparent, then duplicate the layer. Set the duplicate's blend mode to Multiply. You could also change the Opacity settings here. In this case, we've lowered it a little.



Colour correction

20 Almost there! Now would be a good time to step back and give the entire image a glance over for corrections. We've made a new Colour layer underneath the halftone layers to fix some colour mistakes, using a brush and Color Picker to do this.



Fix last minute mistakes

21 Some corrections may require a normal layer for you to paint adjustments onto. For this, make a new layer above all the layers except for the line and halftone ones. Fill in any areas in need of a paint-over with a Hard Round brush.

Do some final adjusting

22 Now we can make any overall colour or brightness changes. Just press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to merge all visible layers together, then move this one to the top of the stack. Use a final round of Hue/Saturation to pump up the colour or Brightness/Contrast to brighten things up.

Alternative lines

Don't want to freehand? Try this sneaky trick!

Drawing the linework by hand (though entirely flexible and easily modified) can seem a bit of an arduous task. Fortunately, it is not the only method that you could use to achieve lines within your cartoon art. The Poster Edges filter (Filter>Artistic>Poster Edges) does a decent job of creating instant linework. In this image, we've used the Poster Edges filter to create the main lines, and then followed it up with some optional freehand edging to bring out the foreground. You could certainly use this filter in combination with layer masks to customise the emphasis of the lines where you feel a little tweaking is needing.

Photomanipulation

148 Layers explained
Learn the secrets behind this powerful feature

154 Make art with layers
Combine graphics with portrait photos

160 Design animal hybrids
Blend two species together to create a hybrid

164 Push layers further
Compose a miniscule world with the power of layers

168 Create a surreal effect
Create a Dalí-inspired scene with the Liquify filter

172 Photomontage edits
Use filters and blend modes to create a photomontage

176 Create incredible composites
Learn to make a dynamic and dramatic composite image

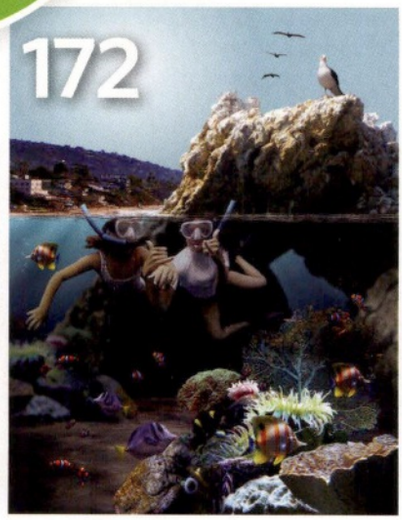
182 Create flames
Turn up the heat by adding fire to your images

186 Vivid photo edits
Use beautiful brushwork to create a magical portrait

190 Combine layer masks
Master some of Photoshop's key tools

194 Create an underwater room
Submerge your own living room in water!

198 Add power to your images
Make a bold statement with your designs



"Make something out of the ordinary"

Layers explained

Learn the secrets behind Photoshop's most powerful feature

If you were to ask any experienced Photoshop user to name the top feature of the program, the feature that is essential to making Photoshop what it is, the feature that is so vital to the application that if it were removed it would not be usable in the same way, we would bet that the answer would always be the same: layers.

Imagine layers as sheets of clear plastic all stacked up on your canvas. Each sheet can have a multitude of styles, effects and adjustments applied to them. They may not make much visual sense or have much impact on their own, but they can work with each other to create a range of effects and form a complete composition.

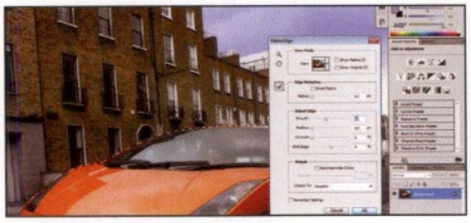
Here we look at the various elements that make layers what they are. We look at masking images together and using Smart Objects for working more efficiently as well as using layer styles and adjustment layers to take your artwork to the next level. By exploring these and more, you'll quickly see how easy it is to turn ordinary images into beautiful works of art with your own unique stamp and the help of layers.

There's so much to cover that we've only touched the surface of what layers are actually capable of doing. You'll find that you can take all of these techniques and apply them to a huge range of edits and situations once you've got the basics.

Using adjustment layers

Learn how to use this mainstay of non-destructive editing

Photoshop's ability to adjust the colours in an image is well known. But did you ever wonder what you would do if you didn't get the settings right first time? Wouldn't it be helpful if they could be tweaked, if the entire adjustment could be easily faded or removed altogether? Well that is exactly the miracle we know as adjustment layers. It puts those settings on a special layer that can be readjusted, reordered or removed in just a few mouse clicks.



Make your selection

01 Download this car image (ref no 1087972) for free from **www.sxc.hu**. Open it and trace its outline with the Quick Selection tool (W). Click the Refine Selection button and increase the Smooth value.

Colour swap

02 Click the Hue/Saturation icon in the Adjustments palette. Use the Targeted Adjustment icon (the pointing hand) and Cmd/Ctrl-drag on the hood until the majority of the vehicle turns blue.

Black & White

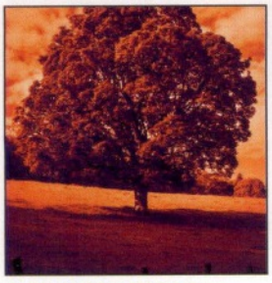
03 Go to Select>Reselect and then use Select>Inverse to switch to the background area. Click on the Black & White adjustment to remove any colour from here.

Adjustable vignette

04 Add another adjustment layer, this time for Levels, and slide the central handle far to the right. Click on the layer mask thumbnail and add a radial black gradient to the mask.

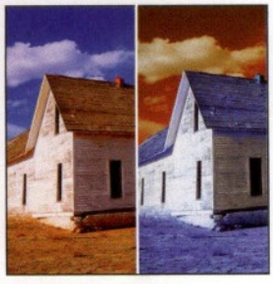
Creative applications

Combine adjustment layers and blending modes for stunning effects



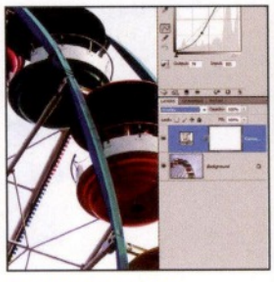
QUICK DUOTONE

Adding a Gradient Map adjustment layer over a landscape image is a great way to create a striking duotone effect. Changing the blend mode of the adjustment layer to Color to further intensify the shot.



HUE REVERSAL

You can reverse the hues of an image by adding an Invert adjustment layer set to the Hue blend mode. This is different than a negative in that the colours are swapped but the shadows and highlights are left alone.



FUN HIGH KEY

Create a fun high-key effect that actually intensifies colours instead of muting them. Add a Curves adjustment layer and make a slight S shape to increase the contrast and then set the blend mode to Overlay.

LEVELS CONTROL

Add two Levels adjustment layers and set the blend mode of one to Multiply and the other to Screen. Now you have individual Levels controls for the shadows and highlights of your image to play with.

Expert tip

Order matters

Pay close attention to the order of your layer stack. Only layers that are below the adjustment layer will be affected by any changes. Imagine adjustment layers to be similar to tinted sheets of plastic or gels. If these are stacked over other sheets, the ones below will be viewed through the gel. Sheets stacked on top of the gel, however, would not be affected by it in any way. The same holds true for ordering adjustment layers in Photoshop.

Expert tip

Edit with mask view

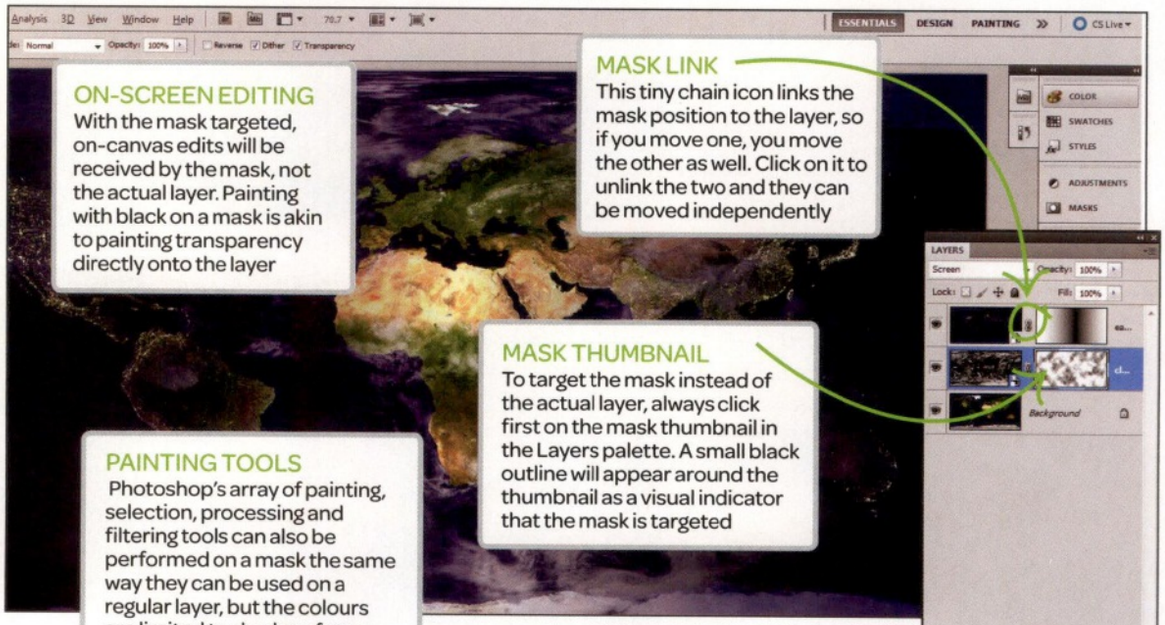
When editing a mask directly, like with the painting tools, it can feel like you are working blind. You can see the results of the edits immediately as the mask is doing its job of controlling the transparency, but occasionally it's helpful to be able to see the mask directly. You can do this by Opt/Alt-clicking on the mask thumbnail and Photoshop will display the greyscale file being used. This is helpful to ensure the mask doesn't have any holes, banding or other anomalies that are difficult to see. To cancel the mask view, Opt/Alt-click the thumbnail again.

Masking

Layers and masks go hand in hand

Masks are a layers' best friends, as they are a way of controlling the visible pixels on a layer. Using masks, pixels can be rendered semi-transparent or even completely invisible without erasing them. Photoshop handles this by linking a greyscale file to a layer and using it as a means of defining visibility. Black pixels on the mask will completely hide the corresponding layer's pixels, while white pixels indicate full visibility.

Photoshop then uses the 256 shades of grey in between as a means of creating semi-transparency. While that may sound confusing, it makes more sense when you see it in action, so check out the steps below.


ON-SCREEN EDITING
With the mask targeted, on-canvas edits will be received by the mask, not the actual layer. Painting with black on a mask is akin to painting transparency directly onto the layer
MASK LINK
This tiny chain icon links the mask position to the layer, so if you move one, you move the other as well. Click on it to unlink the two and they can be moved independently
MASK THUMBNAIL
To target the mask instead of the actual layer, always click first on the mask thumbnail in the Layers palette. A small black outline will appear around the thumbnail as a visual indicator that the mask is targeted
PAINTING TOOLS
Photoshop's array of painting, selection, processing and filtering tools can also be performed on a mask the same way they can be used on a regular layer, but the colours are limited to shades of grey
ADD MASK ICON
The Add Layer Mask icon at the foot of the Layers palette provides an easy way to create a mask for the current layer. A simple click adds a white-filled mask, while Opt/Alt-clicking will add a black-filled mask

"You can see the results of the edits immediately as the mask is doing its job of controlling the transparency"

Global edits

Have fun masking images for a range of effects

Stack planet images

01 Grab the three planetary images by NASA from **www.visibleearth.nasa.gov**. Search for 'land_shallow_topo 2048' and select the images 'Clouds' and 'Land Surface'. Drop the clouds on top of the land and set the blend mode to Screen. Grab the 'City Lights' image and place on top of both.

Night mask

02 With the city lights layer selected, press the Add Layer Mask button. The new mask will be automatically targeted. Set the Foreground swatch to black (D) and use a reflected gradient starting in the centre to mask out this portion of the image.

Partly cloudy

03 Click on the cloud layer and add a mask for it using the same icon in the foot of the Layers palette. Use the Brush tool (B) with the Radius amount set to a high number and very soft edges to paint out any areas of clouds that are obscuring the land mass too much.

Clipping masks

Create a text effect using clipping masks

While layer masks are remarkably handy, they do have their limitations. For example, if you wanted to use a text layer as a mask, you could create a selection of the text, but then you wouldn't be able to edit the words. A solution is to use a clipping mask where the transparency is taken from the base layer.

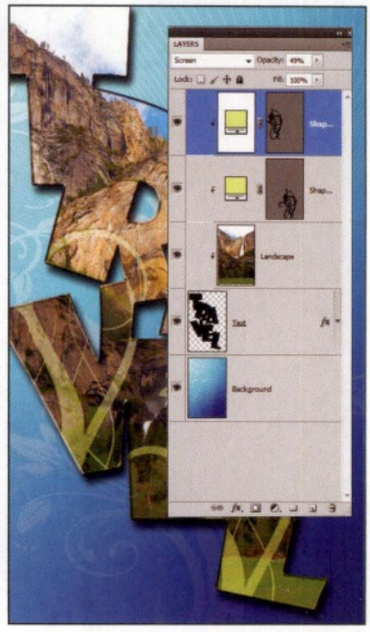
"You can move and manipulate the image layer and the text independently"

The setup

01 First create a text layer and style it as needed, but keep in mind the text colour is not relevant to the mask. Obtain an image to fill the text, such as this luscious mountain waterfall. Drag and drop the photo on top of the text layer.

Clipping magic

02 Hold down the Opt/Alt key and slowly move your cursor down between the two layer thumbnails in the Layers palette. When the cursor turns to a pair of overlapping circles, click it. The photo thumbnail will be indented with a small arrow to the left.



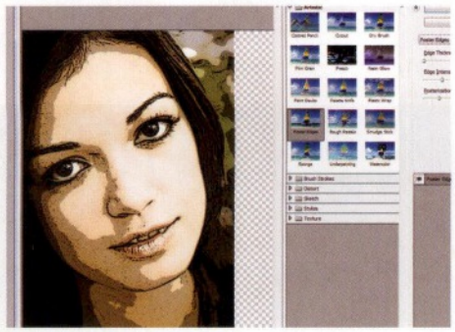
Clipping mask benefits

03 Now you can freely move and manipulate the image layer and the text independently. The text can be edited without any additional work and you can even stack additional clipped layers on top that all inherit the same transparency definition.

Work smarter

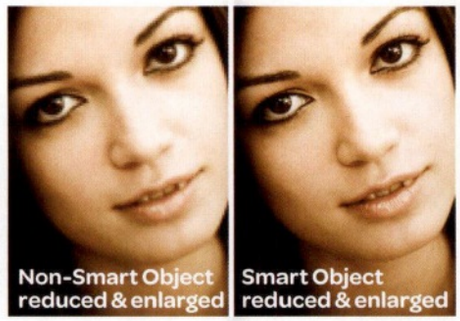
Use Smart Objects to save time and effort

Smart Objects are another clever means of making sure your workflow is non-destructive – think of them as Photoshop's safety nets. The basic idea is that one or several layers can be folded into a single entity that is preserved as a separate file and Photoshop displays a composite view of it. That entity, called the Smart Object, can then be changed without actually altering the layers – it's just the view of the file that changes.



SMART FILTERS

When a filter is applied to a Smart Object it is automatically applied as a Smart Filter. That means it is non-destructive the same way adjustment layers are non-destructive. The filters are listed in the Layers palette beneath the Smart Object thumbnail and they can be reopened at any time to change the settings or be removed entirely.



RESOLUTION PRESERVED

When dealing with layers, scaling an object down usually means lost resolution as pixel information is discarded during the transformation. Scaling a layer up after it has been scaled down should be avoided at all costs. Smart Objects, however, retain the original resolution regardless of the scale, so there's no need to fret about lost pixels.

SOURCE EDITS

Another great feature of using Smart Objects is that each duplicate is still linked to its original source. That means that if you double-click the original Smart Object and make edits to the source file, the duplicates will automatically update to reflect that change (we've added glasses to our portrait).

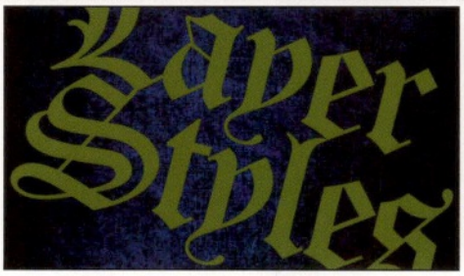
Give your layers style

Adding flair to text doesn't get much easier than with layer styles

Layer styles are a quick and easy means of adding popular effects to any of the elements on your layers. For example, a drop shadow isn't overly difficult to generate by hand, but the Drop Shadow layer style is a live effect that will adapt and change with any alterations you make to the layer. It also allows for easy adjustment of the settings for truly customised results.

If you've never used layer styles before, expect to have your entire workflow turned upside down! Be warned, though, they can be addictive for the new user – being able to bevel and emboss your text with a simple checkbox proves to be irresistible for many.

"Allows for easy adjustment of the settings for customised results"



Humble beginnings

01 Start with an interesting background, such as this one (image ref no 1389728) from **www.sxc.hu**, and then add some text to work with. Double-click the empty space to the right of a layer's name to launch the Layer Style dialog box.

Drop Shadow

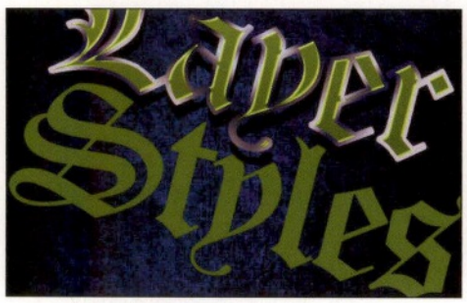
02 Choose Drop Shadow, set the blend mode to Linear Burn and Opacity to 75%. Uncheck Use Global Light and set the Angle to 95, Distance to 79, Spread to 15% and Size to 17px. You can also click and drag on the canvas to move the shadow.

Gradient Overlay

03 Click on the Gradient Overlay style, set the blend mode to Normal and reduce the Opacity to around 15% so the effect is subtle. Keep the gradient as the default black to white and adjust the angle to align with the vertical edge of the text.

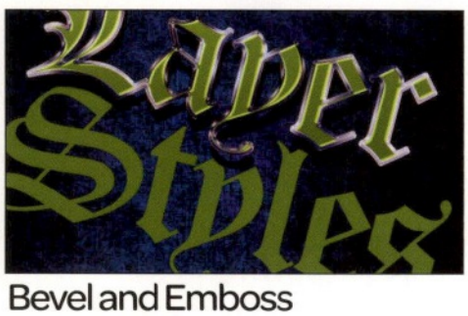
Satin style

04 Click the Satin style and set the blend mode to Color Dodge. Click on the colour chip and then set the hue to white. Change the Opacity to around 75% and adjust the Angle to 141, Distance to 23 and Size to 8. Lastly, uncheck the Invert box.



Edit the colour

05 Add the Stroke style then change Size to 24 and position to Centre. Change the Fill Type to Gradient, set the Style to Diamond and click on the Gradient Bar for the Gradient Editor. Choose the Copper preset but add more colour stops.



Bevel and Emboss

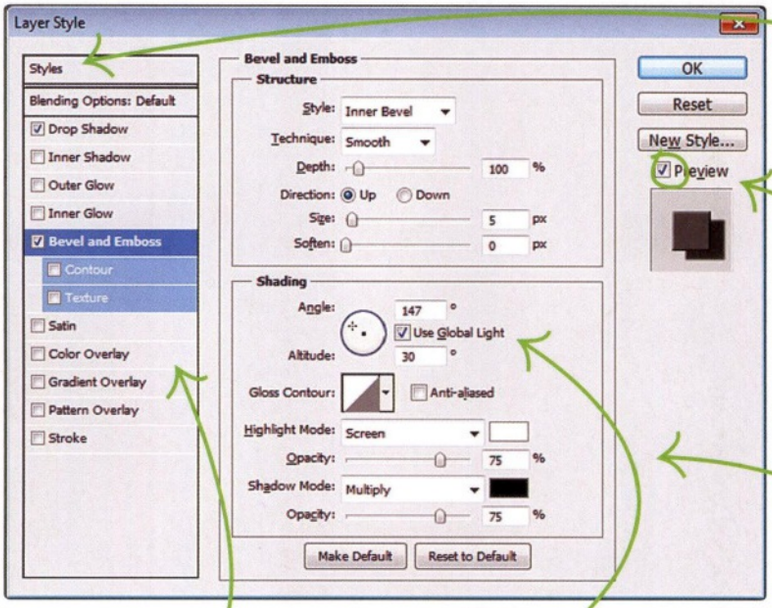
06 Add the Bevel and Emboss style and change the Style to Stroke Emboss, Depth to 103, Size to 46 and Soften to 3. Disengage the Global Light checkbox, setting Angle to 90 and Altitude to 25. Click on the arrow next to the Gloss Contour thumbnail and select the Ring Double contour.

Many uses

Layer styles are not just for text

Using layer styles on text is a great way to create logos, your own stationary or elements for web design. But they can also be used for editing images, from improving snapshots to wild and creative digital art.

The best way to get to know how they work is to try them out on different images, but we've provided some examples below you can try. Always put them on a duplicate layer, though, to keep the style editable!



STYLES LIST

The available styles are listed on the left side of the dialog box. Check the box to activate a style, and then click on the style name to see the settings associated with it

PREVIEW

The thumbnail gives a low-resolution preview of the composite effect of the engaged style settings. The Preview checkbox toggles the live view of the style's effect on the canvas

SETTINGS

The individual settings for each style appear in this area. Several of them have similar controls, but each is unique in what effect those controls generate

STYLE LIBRARY

The word Styles at the top of the list is not just a title; it's actually the library of preset styles currently loaded in the program. This can be expanded to include additional libraries or you can add your own custom styles

GLOBAL LIGHT

The Bevel and Emboss and the two Shadow styles have a light direction control. If this Global Light checkbox is ticked, changes to the light direction will impact all of the styles using Global Light in the image

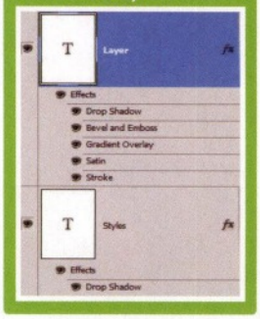
> "The Styles library... can be expanded to include additional libraries or you can add your own custom styles"

Expert tip

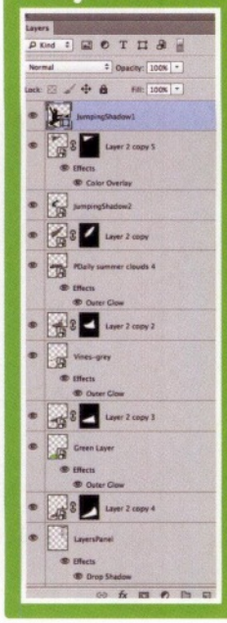
Style control

While the Layer Style dialog is the only place style settings can be adjusted, there are many ways of controlling the styles from the Layers palette. Below each layer is a list of the activated styles. These can be hidden or revealed with the familiar eye icon next to the style name.

Individual styles can also be removed completely by dragging the style name to the trashcan at the bottom of the palette. Probably the most helpful control is the ability to Opt/Alt-drag the styles to copy them to other layers. This can be done with the entire effect or with individual styles.



Layers in Photoshop CS6



Photoshop CS6 made some great improvements for managing layers. The most obvious is the ability to filter the stack. This is represented by a new bar at the top of the palette containing a drop-down and a series of icons. Clicking on the icons, (representing pixel layers, adjustment layers, text layers, shape layers and Smart Objects) adds them to the filter.

The last icon in the bar is a toggle to turn the filtering on and off. Layer styles are now listed in the order of rendering, starting with Bevel and Emboss and ending with Drop Shadow.

Layers can also now be renamed by tabbing through the list instead of having to double-click on each layer name.

More stylish edits

Three effects you can achieve with layer styles

EASY SEPIA TONES

By using a Color Overlay style with a light brown hue and the blend mode set to Color, you've got a quick sepia style. Gradient Overlay set to Radial with a blend mode of Multiply and the black and white gradient gives a vignette.

LIGHT PAINTING

The Outer Glow layer style can be used to create a neon-painting effect. By adding the style to the blank layer before using the Brush tool, you can literally brush the effect onto the canvas. It's like painting with glowing light!

EXTRA LOGO FLAIR

Give logos extra pop with layer styles. Not only does this add flair and interest, but layer styles are resolution-independent, so styling a vector is hassle free. It can be scaled up to any size without blurring or pixelation.

LOVE

Make art with layers

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

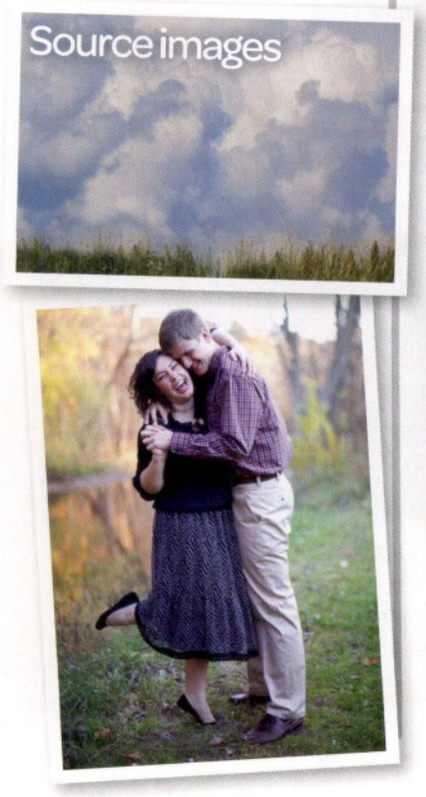
Essentials

What you'll learn

Get to grips with layers, custom shapes and blend modes to turn your photos into beautiful art

Time taken

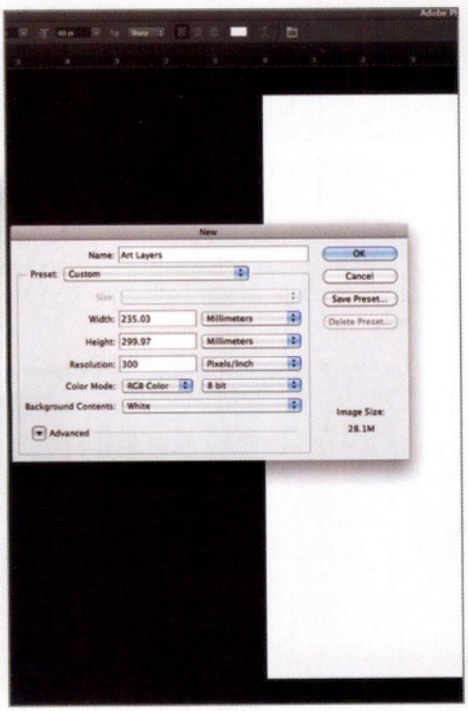
2 hours

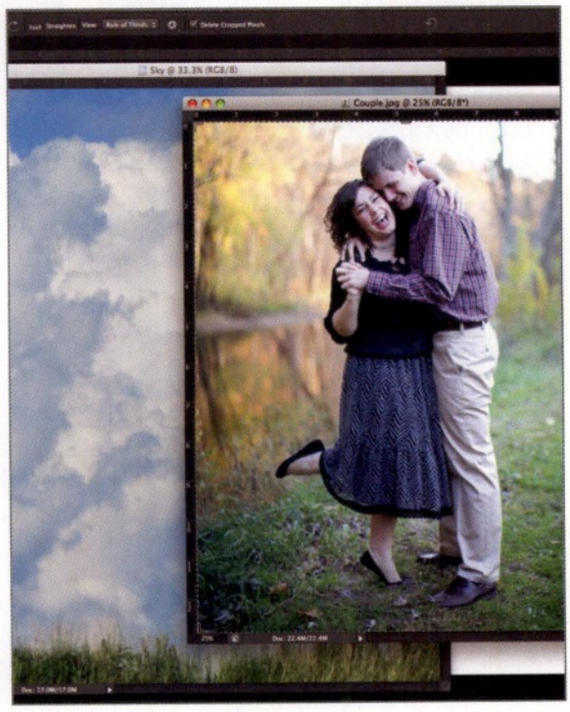


Combine graphics with portrait photos by using custom shapes, layers and blend modes

If you have ever wanted to combine graphics and text with a photo, but weren't sure how, then this is for you! We'll show you how easy it is to give an ordinary photo a creative twist. Learn to add graphics by using the default custom shapes Photoshop has to offer. Here we add a beautiful summer sky to the background of a romantic couple and show how to nestle them in perfectly by erasing the unneeded photo elements. You can use your own photo, or the same one we did which you'll find in the supplied resources.

Add fun hearts, texture and custom shapes, set to various blend modes, and you'll have created the perfect composition in no time. Don't forget to show off your creative compositions to your friends and loved ones!





An empty canvas

01 To start, go to File>New and fill in the dimensions that you want your final image to be. Choose the appropriate height and width, and be sure to set the resolution to 300 dpi for the best print quality.

Open the images

02 Open your resource pack and you will find three images to work with. To see the images as shown, with the ability to drag them around, you may need to toggle your screen mode; you can do this easily by hitting the F key on your keyboard.

Expert tip

Move and Transform

The Move tool is handy for dragging and dropping layers and moving custom shapes on a layer. However, you must remember to have the 'Transform Tool' checkbox checked in the top panel, and to click on the checkbox to settle it in after you finish any moving or transforming. It can be frustrating if you forget to do this, so keep it in mind.

Make the sky pretty!

03 Select the sky image and go to Image>Adjustments>Color balance, then add more cyan to the sky by sliding this option to the left, as shown. This will make the sky a friendlier, more pleasant blue.

The first layers

04 Now you have two images open and a background layer. Using the Move tool (the upper right tool in your tool palette, or V on the keyboard) drag your sky image onto the white background layer. This will make its own layer.

Using the Transform tool

05 Make sure the 'Transform Tool' box is checked in your upper panel and move your sky to fit your background layer by dragging the corners until the image fits. Use this method when you need to resize.

Adding the subject

06 Now drag the 'Couple' image onto the sky image and this will give you three layers, as shown above. This will be the basis of the graphic image in which we'll build a few more layers.

Keeping track

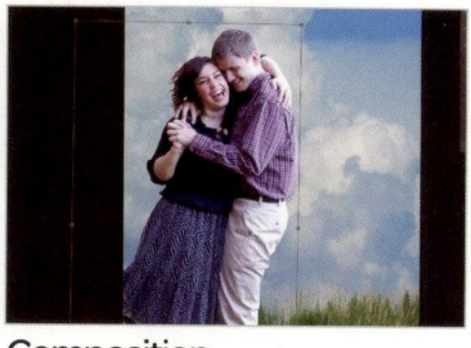
07 To keep track of layers and to access them easily, let's go ahead and give them a name. To do this, just click on a layer's title and rename it to what it is: ie sky, couple, etc. Continue this throughout.

Selecting

08 Select the couple by using the Lasso tool (L). Draw carefully around the outline of their bodies, as close as you can. Then go to Select>Invert and hit the Delete key on your keyboard.

Erasing

09 Go to Select>Deselect. Now zoom in on your couple and ,using the Eraser tool (E), erase all the debris around the edges of the couple. Take your time and adjust the brush size as needed.

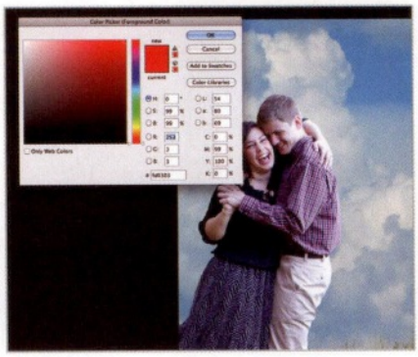


Composition

10 Use your Move tool to change the composition. Make sure you are on the Couple layer and drag them to the lower left. You can also rotate them a bit by swinging your mouse or stylus out and using the Rotate tool that will appear.

Looking sharp

11 To make the couple pop out more, head to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask and adjust the sliders, as shown, until the couple looks more defined and they stand out. Don't overdo this.



Custom shapes

12 We are going to add some custom shapes, but first click on the foreground colour and select a nice deep red , as shown, because we are going to add some hearts to our image!

Custom hearts

13 Using the Custom Shape tool (U), click on the dropdown to load more shapes. Here you can choose from any shape you like, from hearts and a footprints, to music notes and snowflakes!

Adding hearts

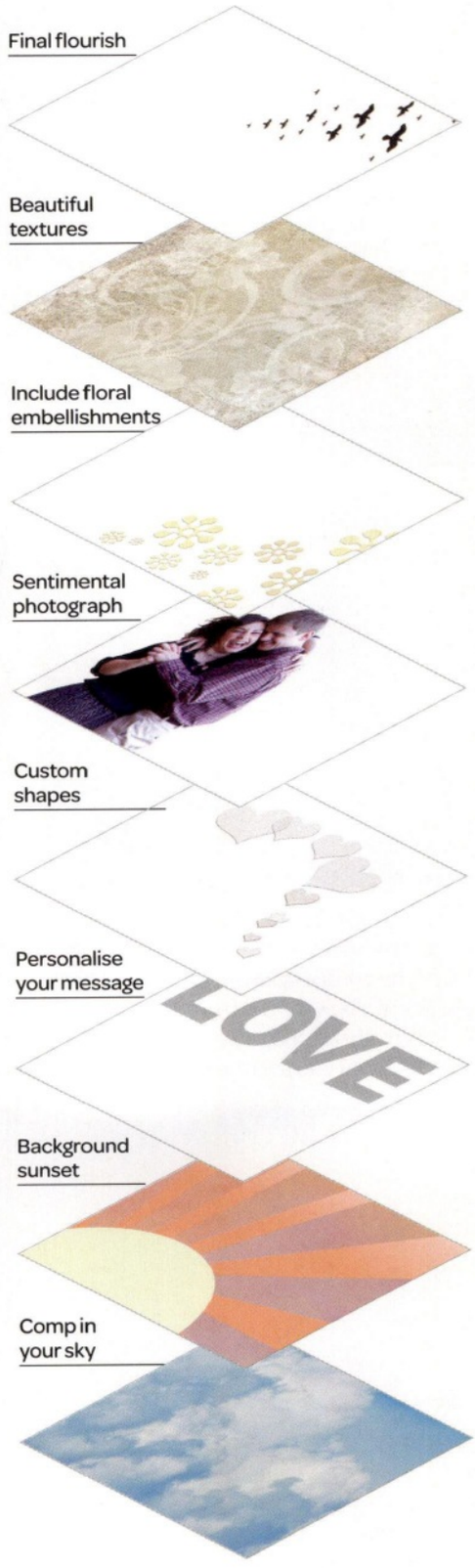
14 We are going to start with a big heart right in the middle. Just drag the custom shape until you get the size that you want and then use the Move tool to move or rotate, as we did before. Again, it will make its own layer.

Layer effects

15 To make your heart stand out more, click on the FX icon at the bottom of the Layer palette and add a Bevel & Emboss with Contour and Texture ticked at their default settings. This will make your shape really pop.

Layer structure

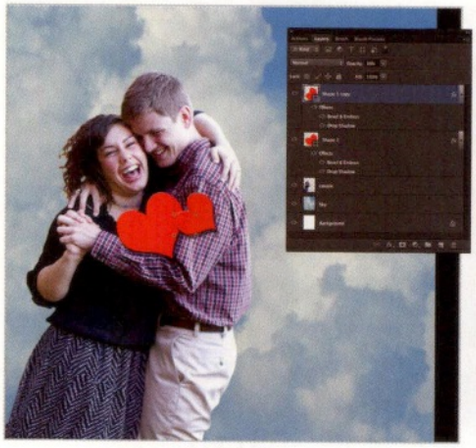
How layers stack up is important to the final look of your artwork



Expert tip

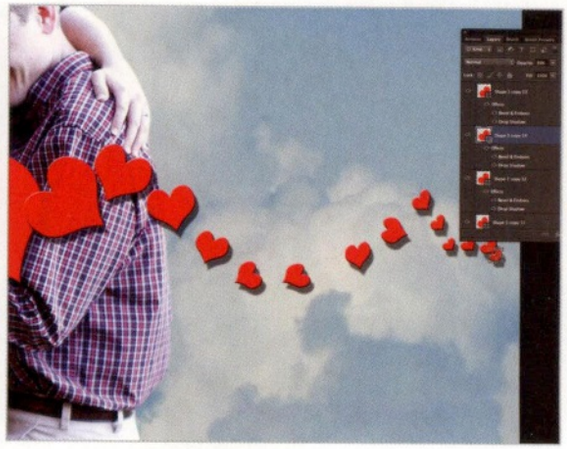
Colour Match

When using multiple images, make sure that they have a similar colour temperature. For instance, you do not want to use a couple that is in the shade and put them on a sunny day background. You also want to make sure that the custom shapes are complimentary. Here, the red hearts go well with the blue sky, her black shirt and his red plaid shirt. It just works!



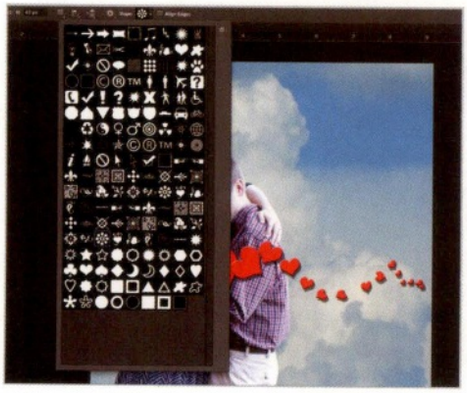
More hearts!

16 You can duplicate the Heart layer by left clicking on the layer and selecting 'Duplicate layer'. Then, using the Move tools, change the size and angle of this heart. You may also want to add a little 'Drop Shadow' from the option in the FX menu.



Increase the love

17 Keep adding more hearts just as you did previously but make them smaller and smaller, descending into the background, as shown. Change the angle of each to make it more interesting. Ensure that the hearts are overlapping correctly from foreground to background. Zoom in, if needed.

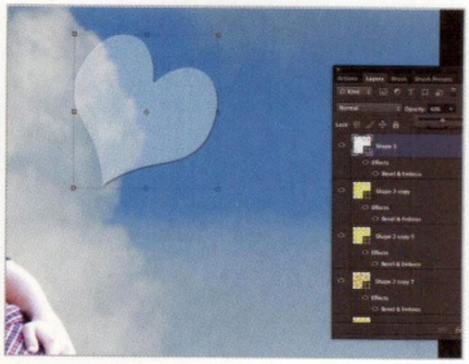


More custom shapes

18 To add more interest and colour to the composition, let's choose a bright yellow and a flower from the custom shapes. Look through the shapes and then choose the flower that you find the most pleasing.

Add flowers

19 Now add yellow flowers to the grass area, varying their size as we did with the hearts, and adding the FX in the same way. Add as many as you feel are needed.

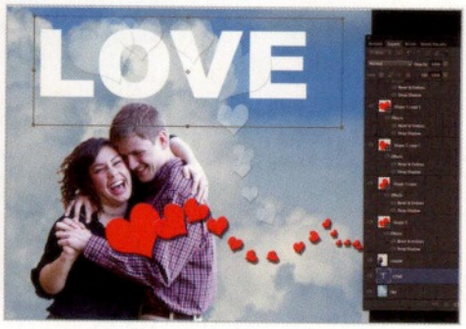


Sky love

20 Now that you have these custom shapes down, let's add some more hearts shapes to the sky. Select white as the foreground colour and, on your layer, decrease the opacity so some of the sky shows through, making it more subtle.

Even more hearts!

21 Keep on adding hearts in amongst the clouds, varying the angles, sizes and the layer opacities. Following the line of the clouds makes a pleasing arrangement, don't you think? Add as many as you please, but don't make it too busy.



Love is in the air

22 Select the Sky layer and grab your Type tool (T). Make your text colour white and choose a bold font, then type in a font size that fits; we used 200. Decrease the opacity of the text layer for a softer look.

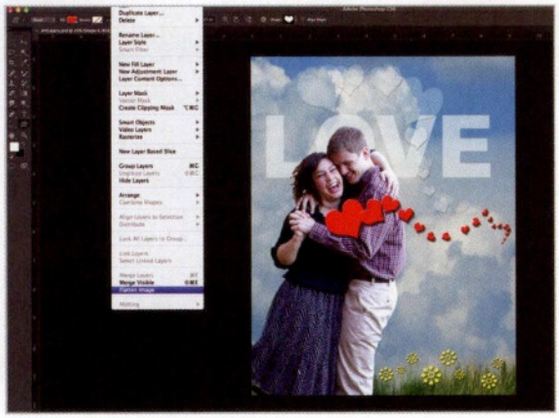
Expert tip

Custom Shape

Sometimes, when you are using custom shapes, it can get confusing when you switch from one custom shape to another. At times, you may find that the colour you chose for the second shape is colouring the shape that you used previously. To avoid this confusion, you can simplify things by inserting a transparent layer between the shape changes.

Love has your back

23 Now let's position the LOVE text to really add to the composition. Since the O is round, and so are their heads, lets put the O in LOVE behind the man's head, as shown above. Looks great there, doesn't it?



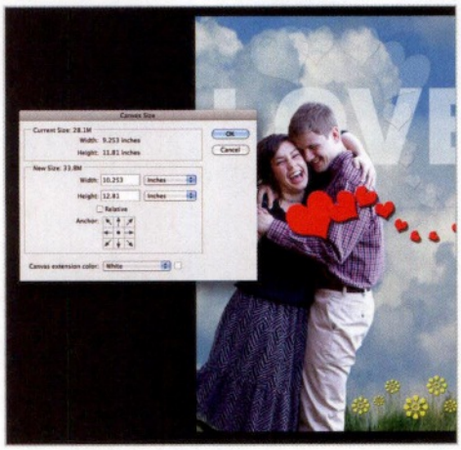
Flatten image

24 If you are all done with adding custom shapes and are happy with the layers, then it's time to flatten them all into one image. To do this, head over to Layer>Flatten Image. We aren't finished yet, but we don't need the layers any more.

Expert tip

Erasing with accuracy

Erasing can be tricky, and if it's a new technique for you then it is best to work very slowly and to zoom in very closely, so that you can avoid erasing important areas of the image. It is also good to ensure you are using a soft brush, which can be selected from within your brush menu.



Increase canvas

25 Let's add a border to the image. First, we need to increase the canvas size by going to Image>Canvas size. Add one inch to the height and width of the canvas, being sure to select white as your colour first.

Border enhancement

26 So now you have a white border, which looks pretty cool, but we are going to enhance the border even more. Make a duplicate layer and then, using the Move tool, shrink the top layer so that it is slightly smaller than the second layer.

Stoke the border

27 Click on the check mark before proceeding to settle in the Move tool. Now go to the layer FX blend modes and choose Stroke, using black, and adjust the outline to your taste. On a similar note, try adjusting the colours too. For example, go for white hearts instead for a subtler effect. Make the colours work for you!

What can go wrong

Blend modes gone bad

Blend modes are a great way to add interest to the extra elements that you incorporate into your image, such as the custom shapes that we added here. Adding textures, beveling and shadows can really make them stand out and be noticed. However, it is easy to overdo this technique and ruin an otherwise wonderful creation. Many people do not realise that they can tweak every blend mode simply by clicking on the mode and revealing the sliders, where you can then decrease the effect. This is one of those times when less is much more!

Design animal hybrids

Blend two species together to create a hybrid offspring

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Warp tool
Curves
Brightness/Contrast
Blend modes
Liquify

Time taken

2.5 hours

Whenever we see a platypus, we can't help but think nature secretly crossbred a beaver with a duck and wonder to myself what other possible abominations to animal kind nature is hiding.

What would a leopard-printed dolphin look like? How about a snake-skinned piggy? Or a zebra-striped elephant? If any of these nutty combinations tickle your fancy, today is your lucky day as we'll be showing you how to create your own crossbreed in Photoshop!

In this step-by-step tutorial, we'll be covering the techniques used to extract and apply textures from one animal to another. Using just a few key tools and the Overlay blend mode, you'll see how simple it can be to combine your own favourite animals. You won't be limited to only creating zebra-elephant hybrids, as the methods used in this tutorial will work across a multitude of animal types and even objects. You'll exercise the fine art of carefully applying textures onto your creature piece by piece to achieve a textural effect that looks natural. Well, as natural as a hybrid of two animals that should not be put together can be.

Regardless of your skill level in image editing with Photoshop, there should be plenty of tips and tricks for anyone to pick up in this lesson. So grab the source images included on the CD or use your own to follow along and give evolution a helping hand!

Rough placement

01 First, open the image of the elephant ('RS10775_Huge_lashes.jpg') as your base, then open the main source of the zebra stripes ('Picture_115.jpg') in a second document. Using the Lasso tool, make a rough selection of the zebra's body and paste it onto your main document. Use Edit>Transform>Distort to reshape the piece to roughly fit the elephant's body.

Warp the texture

02 Lower the Opacity of the stripes layer to 40% to help see the underlying elephant then select Edit> Transform>Warp to warp the texture to the contours of the elephant's body. Click and drag your cursor from about a third of the way into the selection and pull outwards to create a rounded contour. Drag the corners in to contract and smooth out the overall texture.

Expert tip

Select and save paths

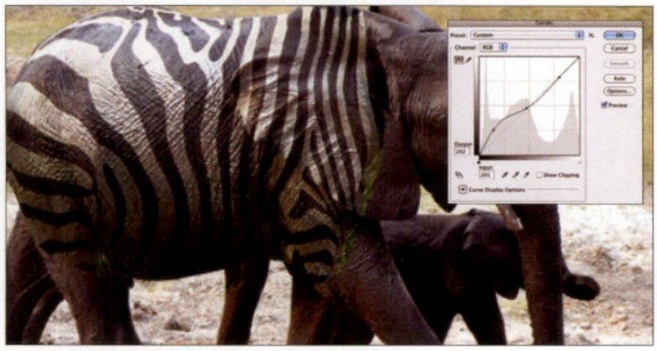
When creating paths, make sure to select Create a New Path to avoid overwriting an existing one. Saving for specific segments such as the elephant's body, legs and additional image elements will help to save time. Right-clicking the thumbnail in the Paths menu will make a selection of the path's shape.

Create shape paths

03 Hide the stripes layer. Using the Pen tool, select nodes all around the elephant to create a basic path of the figure. This will come in handy as you'll commonly refer to the path as your guide for cropping elements to the body.

Blend the texture

04 Ctrl/right-click the thumbnail of your elephant path and choose Make Selection. Invert this area (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I) and cut (Ctrl/Cmd+X) the excess from your stripes layer. Set this layer's blend mode to Overlay.



Adjust curves

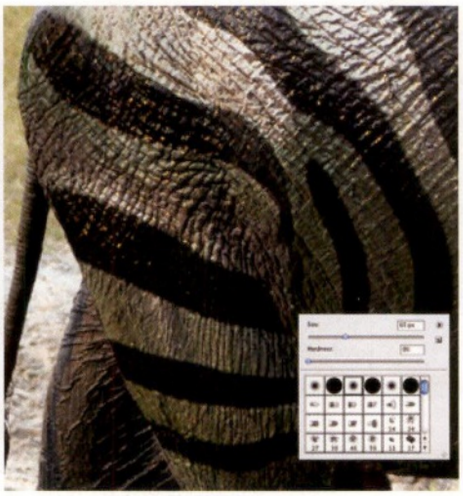
05 Select Image>Adjustments>Curves to tweak the image's tonal values and alter the stripes to suit the elephant. Raising points at the left end of the curve will control the dark values in your image, with the lighter tones on the right. Raising the curve brightens these areas while lowering it will darken. We slightly raised the first quarter of the curve.

Remove the excess

06 Select the Eraser tool set at 100% Opacity and erase the texture from the elephant's ears and legs, as those sections will be texturised individually on new layers. Use a hard edged Eraser to delineate the ears from the striped texture and a softer brush around the thighs, as those will require a softer blend into the textures you'll apply later.

Continue the texturing

07 Now we'll continue the texturing on the legs. Again, use the Lasso tool to select a section of the largest thigh from the zebra source and paste it onto the main document on a new layer. Position the segment roughly with Distort and use the elephant work path to help remove the excess.



Fine-tune with the Smudge tool

08 Select the Smudge tool set at 50% Strength and drag the ends of the stripes around the legs to adjust and fit the contours of the elephant's thigh.

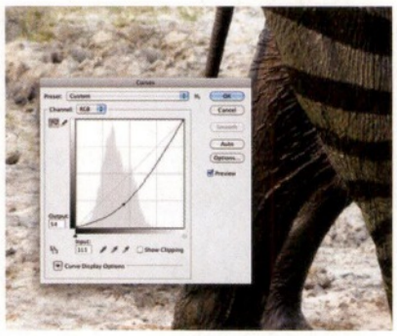
Expert tip

Selective sharpening

When warping and transforming specific sections of your image, you may find enlarging the segments softens the texture. To selectively sharpen specific areas, make a selection around the part you want to sharpen with the Lasso tool. Shift+Ctrl/Cmd-click to copy the selection across multiple layers and Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste the selection in place. Apply sharpening to this layer using the High Pass or Sharpen filter and then adjusting the opacity.

Darken the feet

09 To darken the elephant's feet to match the tone of a zebra's hoof, make a rough selection of the foot and copy it onto a new layer. Using the elephant shape path, extract the foot from the excess background debris.



Curves again

10 Select Image> Adjustments>Curves, select a point near the Middle and drag it down. This will darken the overall tone of the middle greys while leaving the darkest and lightest points of the section intact. Use a soft Eraser to blend the foot onto the rest of the leg.

Brightness

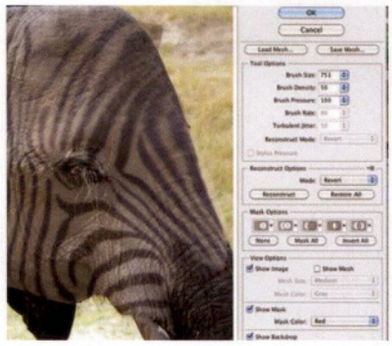
11 Continue to texture the rest of the legs. Sometimes you'll find the darkest areas don't get affected when the texture is overlaid. Open Image> Adjustments> Brightness/Contrast and raise the Brightness value.

Draw in some additional stripes

There are times when no matter what you do, you just can't find a source to texture one particular segment of your image. In these cases, you can hand-draw stripes to fill the gaps. First, select the Eyedropper tool, set the blend mode of one of your stripe layers to Normal and select the colour of one of the dark stripes. Now use the Pen tool and select nodes to create the path shapes for your dark stripes. Fill these paths with the selected Foreground colour and set the blend mode to Overlay. Use the Smudge tool to soften the edges of the stripes and blend it onto the area for a seamless finish.

The Cutout filter

12 Open the second zebra source image ('113031276218.jpg'), make a selection around the face and paste it into the main document. Use the Free Transform tool to position the segment so that the zebra's eye aligns with the elephant's, then use the Eraser tool to extract the part of the texture obstructing the elephant's eye.

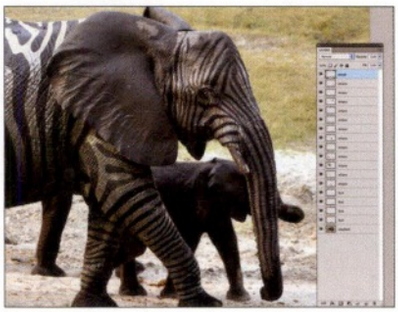


Liquify the texture

13 Because the elephant's face is much larger than the zebra's, simply warping the texture may not be sufficient. In this case, make a selection of the stripy skin and open the Liquify window (Filter>Liquify). Using a high Brush Pressure (90-100), drag the stripes to suit the contours of the elephant's head.

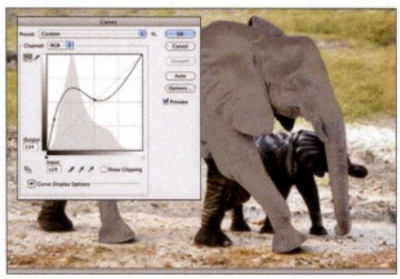
Stretch to fit

14 To texture areas such as the trunk, simply copy the longest section of stripe you can from your zebra sources and paste it onto the document. Using Free Transform, stretch the section vertically to reflect the general size of the segment.



Warp the trunk

15 Again, use the Warp tool to adjust the texture to the curvatures of the trunk. As we did for the feet, darken the tip of the trunk to simulate the snout area of a zebra. You can do this by copying the tip of the elephant's trunk, pasting it onto a new layer, adjusting the brightness and softening the blend.



Unify the shading

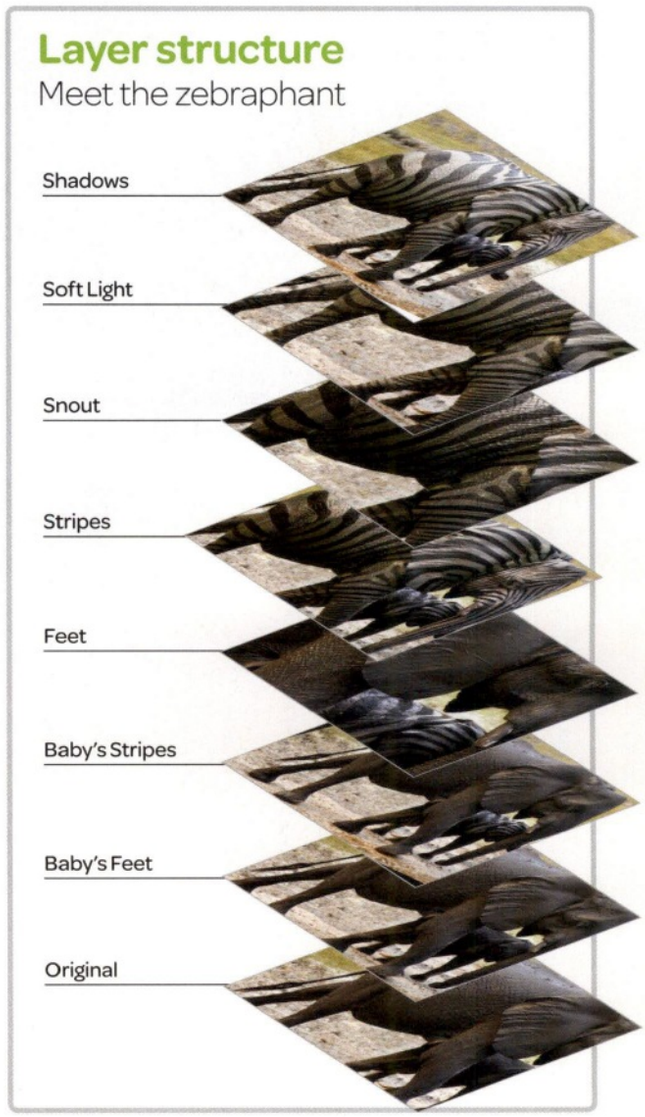
16 Using the elephant shape path, make a copy of the animal and paste it onto the top layer. Create an S-shaped curve to dull the general tone and apply the Soft Light blend mode. This will create a more consistent feel throughout the figure. You can lower the curve on the left to keep the shadows darker or blow out the highlights by raising the right side.

Deepen the shadows

17 Use the Paintbrush with black as the Foreground colour to paint in darker recesses in key areas such as under the ears. This will help to delineate the sections better. Lower the Opacity to about 30%.

Sharpen the image

18 On a new layer, create a merged copy of the entire image and place at the top of the stack (Shift+Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+E). Apply Filter>Other>High Pass set to 6px with the blend mode at Soft Light.



Photomanipulation

Push layers further

Discover how to shrink ordinary stock images and compose a miniscule world inside a bottle with the power of layers

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Isolate stock images and combine them into a miniature composition with adjustment layers

Time taken

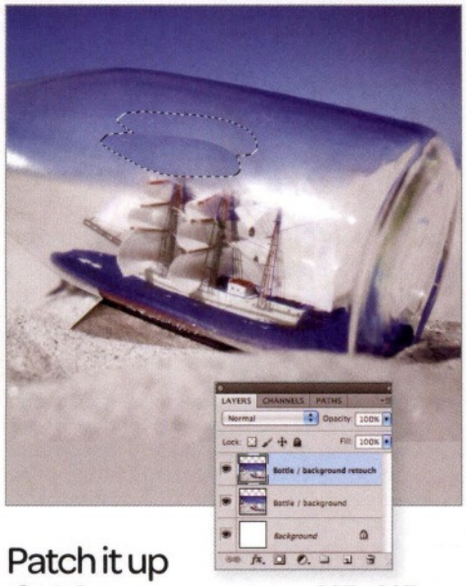
2 hours

Expert tip

Make a pen friend

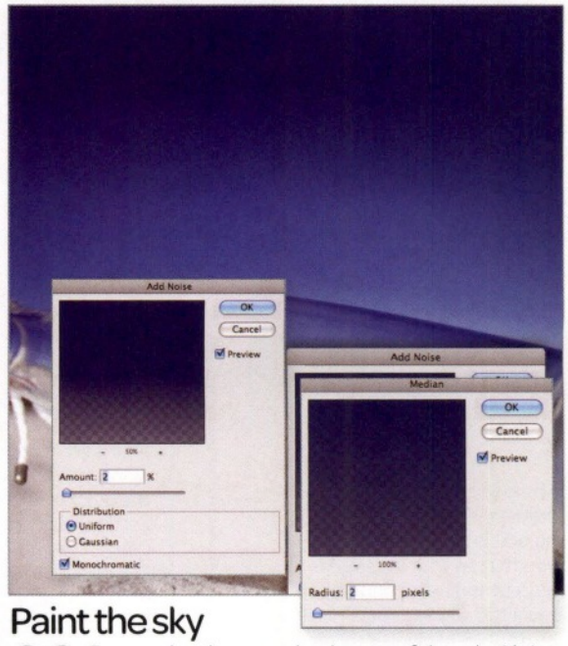
Set the Pen tool to Paths when extracting the sea creatures, then Feather it by a few pixels or even use the Refine Edge command. The Pen causes the most fear among new users, but it's revered by those who get to know it. To fine-tune a path, hold Ctrl/Cmd to access the Direct Selection tool and adjust anchor points.

In this project we'll create the illusion of a tiny ecosystem within a bottle. As you'll discover, it's a fun and easy way to add another dimension to an otherwise plain start image, and a technique that has endless possibilities when applied to other subjects. Observing how light reacts in the real world is a key factor when combining multiple photographs that all have different degrees of light, shadow and colour. To pull off this effect, we'll make extensive use of Photoshop's non-destructive adjustment layers and layer masks. We'll also demonstrate how channel masks and the Magic Eraser can be used to extract complex images from their backgrounds. We used a number of stock images from the Dreamstime, PhotoXpress and stock.XCHNG websites, as well as custom brushes by Obsidian Dawn (**http://redheadstock.deviantart.com/art/Water-II-Photoshop-Brushes-83727899**). Get the full list from **http://tinyurl.com/6myow5q**



Patch it up

01 Create a square canvas 307 x 307mm, Resolution 300dpi and Background white. Our starting image is from the Dreamstime stock website (ref 14810912) and we opened this as a new layer, pressing Ctrl/Cmd+T to resize it to fit the canvas. Duplicate this layer, then use the Patch tool to fill the top portion of the ship with sky.



Paint the sky

02 On another layer, grab a large soft brush, Alt/Opt-click to sample a blue colour from the sky and fill the space at the top. To remove any ugly banding that might occur, choose Noise>Add Noise and enter 2%, then add 2px of Median from the same menu. This layer can also be merged.

Colour adjustment

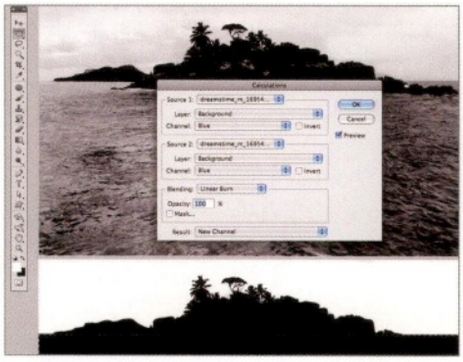
03 Use the same technique on a new layer to fill the bottom edge of the bottle with a sand colour and then merge. Now add an unclipped Color Balance adjustment layer and set the Midtone Red to +9, the Green to +22 and the Blue to -46.

Whip up a storm

04 Place an image of a stormy sea at the top. Rotate to match the bottle angle, then resize and stretch to fit its length. Add a layer mask and then use an assortment of black soft-edged brushes to blend the top and bottom edges. Now clip a Color Balance adjustment with Red at +50, Green at +23 and Blue at -21.

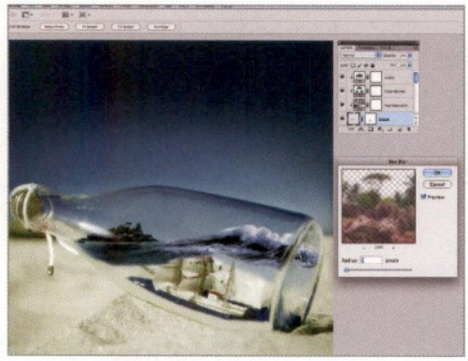
Rough seas

05 Duplicate the sea and its adjustment layer. Reposition over the bottle's base (on the right) and click the chain icon to unlink its mask. Hold Ctrl/Cmd and drag the control points to match the angle. Now relink the mask and modify it. Repeat this process to add more sea as required.



Channel mask

06 Find a photo of a tropical island, open it up and choose Image> Calculations. Set both Channels to Blue and the blending to Linear Burn. Target the newly created channel and use the Dodge and Burn tools to bleach the sky and darken the remainder. Now fill any large areas with black or white to create a clean silhouette.



Land ahoy

07 Hit Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the channel, then Ctrl/Cmd-click its thumbnail to select. Activate the top RGB channel and Copy>Paste within your project file. Resize and position along the horizon, then apply a 5px Box Blur filter. Mask the layer, then clip Hue/Saturation, Color Balance and Levels adjustments to blend it.

Water divider

08 Choose an image of a water splash and go Select>Color Range. Set Fuzziness to 50, click the white background and check Invert. Copy>Paste as a top layer and change the mode to Luminosity. Transform and position it along the length of the bottle to divide the sea and mask. Duplicate to create the same effect on the bottom of the bottle.

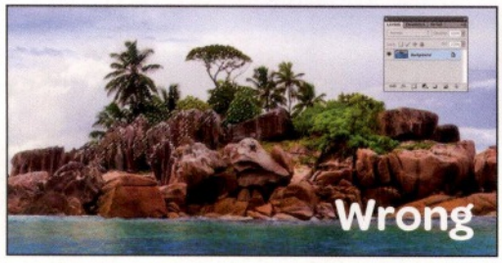
Expert tip

Adjustment advantage

The benefit of using adjustment layers is that no edit is permanent until you flatten your image. An adjustment layer can be revisited at any point simply by double-clicking its layer thumbnail. By default an adjustment layer is clipped to the target. To apply it to all underlying layers, Alt/Opt-click between the adjustment and targets.

Correct selection methods Choose the best tools

Photoshop has a plethora of tools and techniques to successfully extract images from their backgrounds. This is great news because the same approach won't work on all images, so the more methods you master, the quicker and more effective you'll become at getting rid of unwanted backgrounds. For instance, the Channel mask technique works best on images that have a decent contrast between subject and background, and contain complex edge detail. Attempting to select the island with either the Magic Wand or Quick Selection tools would produce an inferior result to the one we have.



Sky removal

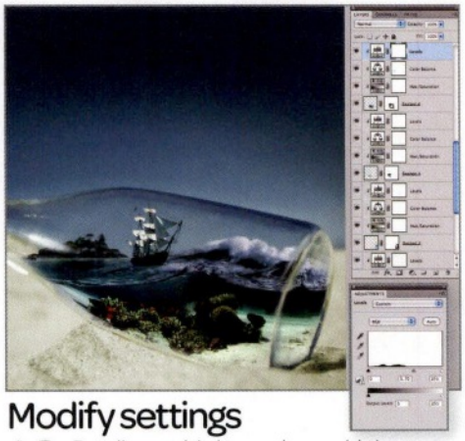
09 Open a stock image of a ship and double-click the layer thumbnail to release its transparency. Set the Magic Eraser to a Tolerance of 32 with Contiguous checked and begin deleting the sky. You'll find it a fiddly task to remove every area between the ship's rigging – just remember the image will be reproduced small.

Ship ahoy

10 Place the ship as a top layer and transform and position at a slight angle on the water, applying 1.5px of Gaussian blur. Blend the hard edges of the water with a mask, then clip a Levels and Color Balance adjustment so that the ship matches the rest of the scene.

Deep-sea terrain

11 Add a shot of some underwater plants as a new layer above the Bottle/Background Retouch adjustment layer. Flip it horizontally, then transform it, resize and mask. Now clip Hue/Saturation, Color Balance and Levels adjustments as before to blend with the rest of the scene.

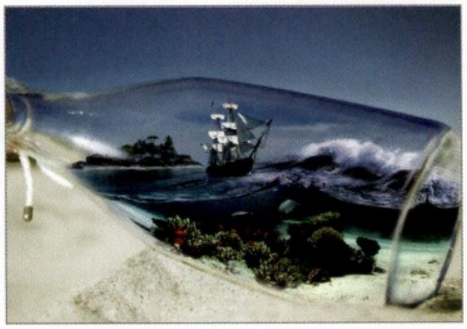


Modify settings

12 Duplicate this layer along with its adjustments a couple of times to fill the bottom and neck of the bottle, then modify their masks accordingly. Now add another underwater stock photo as a final layer and blend the edges with a mask. Clip the same three adjustments, but modify their settings to suit.

Brooding sky

13 Place a cloudy sky image above the last Seabed adjustments then transform and mask to create the sky within the bottle. Change the blend mode to Overlay and reduce the Opacity to 55%. Now clip a Hue/Saturation adjustment, select Yellows from the drop-down menu changing the Hue value to -45 and the Saturation to -88.



Final edits

14 Extract images of a shark and a turtle from their background (see the box on selection methods), place at the top, scale and clip Hue/Saturation, Color Balance and Levels adjustments. Finally, add another top layer, then use the custom water brushes to give some white spray detail over the wave and around the base of the island.

Layer structure

Build a nautical composite

OCEAN SPRAY
Custom water brushes were used on a final layer to paint a little spray over selective areas.

CREATURES
The sea creatures were cut out with the Pen tool and modified with adjustments.

THE SHIP
The ship was extracted with the Magic Eraser. Adjustment layers were also added.

BIG SPLASH
A series of foreground layers placed along the bottle divide above and below the sea.

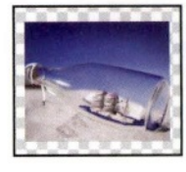
THE ISLAND
A desert island was extracted with a channel mask, then placed and masked on the horizon.

STORMY SEAS
Three layers of stormy seas added above the sky, blended together with masks.

NEW SKY
A darker sky is placed in the bottle and masked, then a Hue/Saturation adjustment used.

SEABED
Four seabeds, along with accompanying adjustments, are placed in.

COLOR BALANCE
An overall Color Balance adjustment layer was added.



BACKGROUND
Extra sky is added and the bottle base filled with sand on new merged layers.

Start images

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Get surreal with the Liquify filter, Free Transform tool and the Magic Extractor

Time taken

2 hours

Create a surreal effect

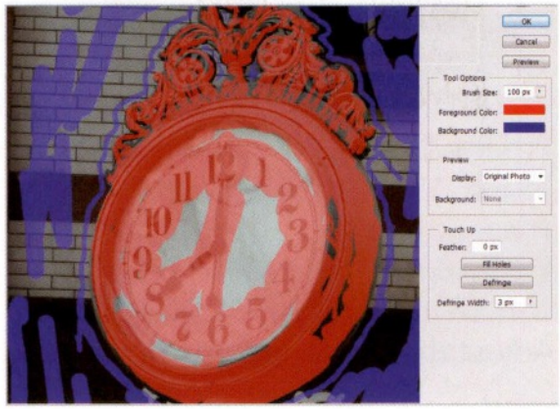
Create a Dalí-inspired scene with Photoshop's Liquify filter

Achieving this surreal effect is fun and easy, and can be done in both Photoshop Elements and Photoshop CS. This piece mainly uses the Liquify filter to twist, pull, twirl and warp parts of an image. The Free Transform tool comes in handy when you need to skew and resize, and we will also demonstrate how to use the Magic Extractor tool (if you're using Photoshop CS you can use the Quick Selection tool instead as there is no Magic Extractor). For a truly surreal image you have to add some surprising details, and Photoshop Elements has all the necessary tools to create the perfect photocomposition. With this in mind, we will demonstrate that you don't necessarily need Photoshop to go that extra mile in creating great-looking images.

You can use the supplied files to have a go at this yourself but you can add your own photos, too.

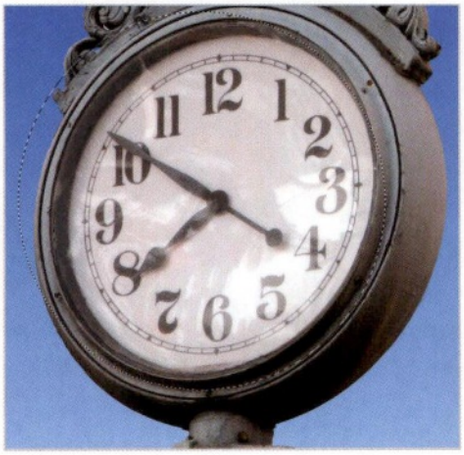
Extract the clock

01 Open the image 'Clock.jpg' and extract its background using Image>Magic Extractor. If you're using Photoshop CS, you can use the Quick Selection tool (W) and Refine Edges in the Options bar for a cleaner cut. In the Magic Extractor interface, paint with the red Foreground Brush tool (B) on the areas you want to keep and with the blue Background Brush (P) on the parts you don't.



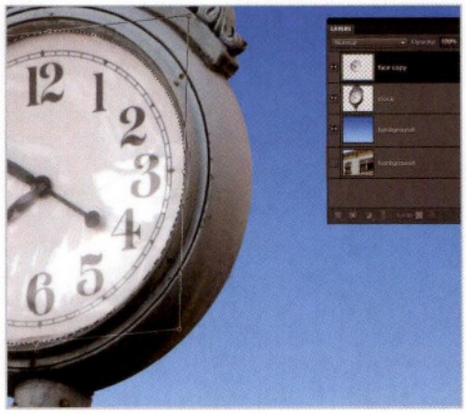
New background

02 Open the file 'Building.jpg' using File> Place and add it below the clock face. Go to Image>Rotate>Flip Layer Horizontal and, with the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T), hold Shift and resize the image. Hide the layer by clicking the eye icon.



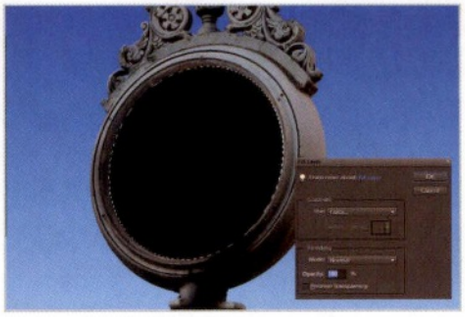
Cut out the face

03 We need to separate the clock face from the frame. Grab the Elliptical Marquee tool (M), hold down the Opt/Alt key and use it to draw a circular selection just around the white part of the clock face.



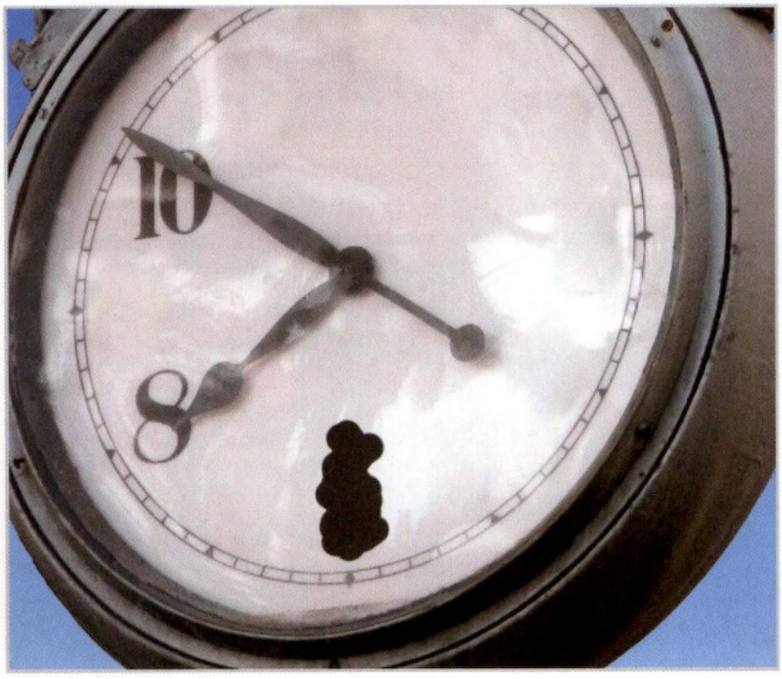
Adjust the selection

04 To match the clock angle we need to skew the selection. Click on Select>Transform Selection and adjust the marquee to match the clock face. Copy and paste on a new layer using Cmd/Ctrl+C and Cmd/Ctrl+V, and then name it Face Copy.



Fill the selection

05 Create a new layer, naming it Black, hold Cmd/Ctrl and click on the layer Face Copy to reactivate the selection marquee. Now click on the Black layer and choose Edit>Fill Selection using black.

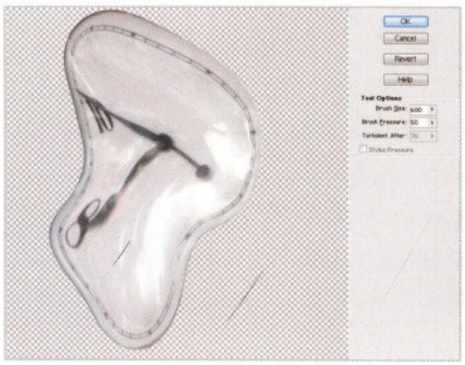


Spot Healing Brush

06 Use the Spot Healing Brush tool (J) set to Proximity Match to erase the numbers. Duplicate Face Copy and name the new layer Face. With a soft 50px brush, paint over each number one by one.

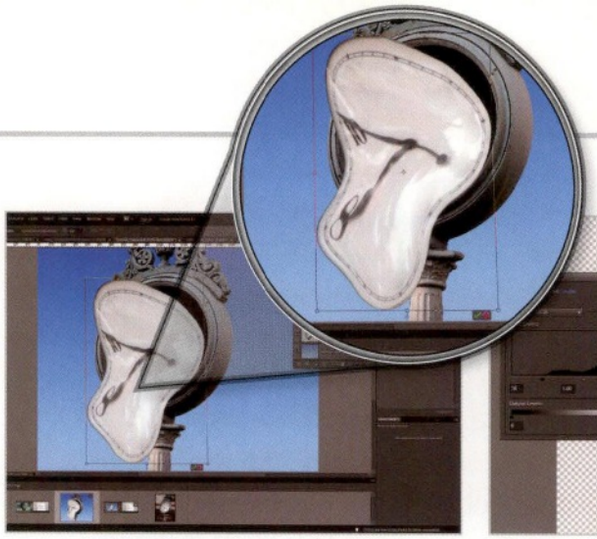
Stretch the clock face

07 Before applying the Liquify filter, we will need to stretch the clock face to make it longer. Hold Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool and drag the bottom handle down to stretch the image.



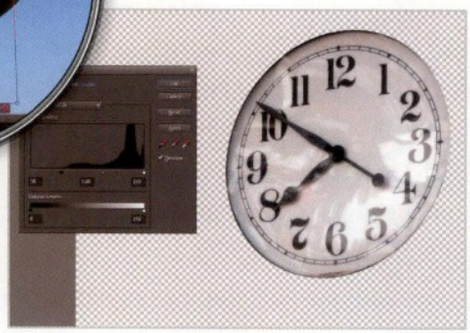
Liquify effect

08 To create the melting effect, go to Filter>Distort>Liquify. Use a large brush at 600px and keep the pressure at 50. Place the brush over the clock face and drag to warp and distort the image. Now hit OK.



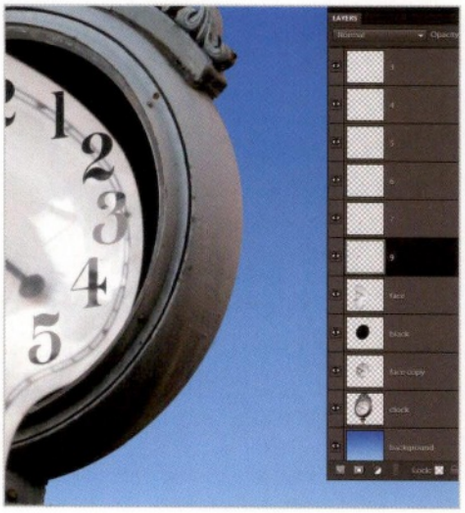
Adjust the melting clock

09 We will need to shape and position the clock face in the clock frame. Open the Free Transform tool, hold the Cmd/Ctrl key and move each corner to skew the image, holding Opt/Alt to scale it up a little. Press Enter to apply the changes.



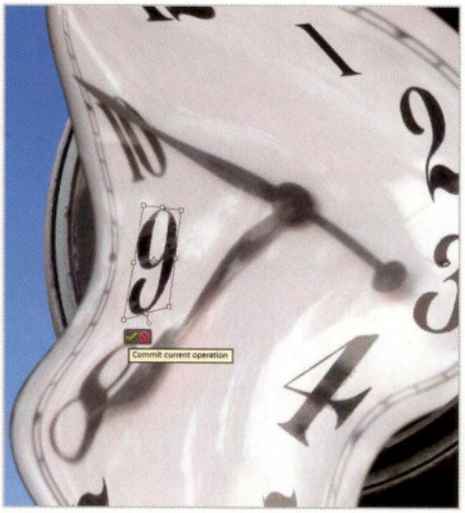
Adjust the levels

10 On the Face Copy layer the numbers are a little opaque, so you will need to increase the contrast. Use Cmd/Ctrl+L to open the Levels dialog. Drag the black point slider right for more contrast (the left-hand Input Levels value should be around 70).



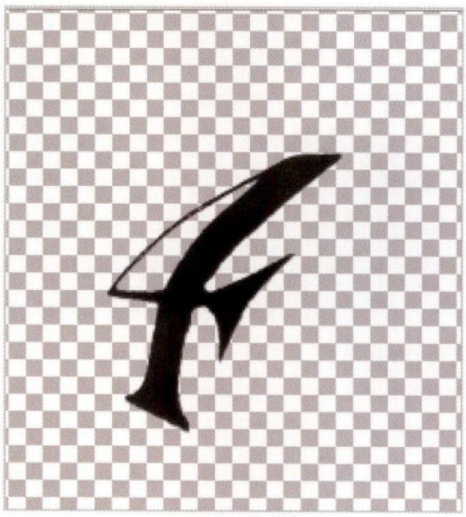
Select the numbers

11 To give a surreal feel to the image, cut and paste the numbers individually. On the Face Copy layer, grab the Quick Selection tool (A), select each number and cut and paste them onto different layers.



Adjust the perspective

12 Drag the Face layer underneath the numbers in the Layers palette. Hold Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool, select each number and skew, resize and distribute around the image.



Distort the numbers

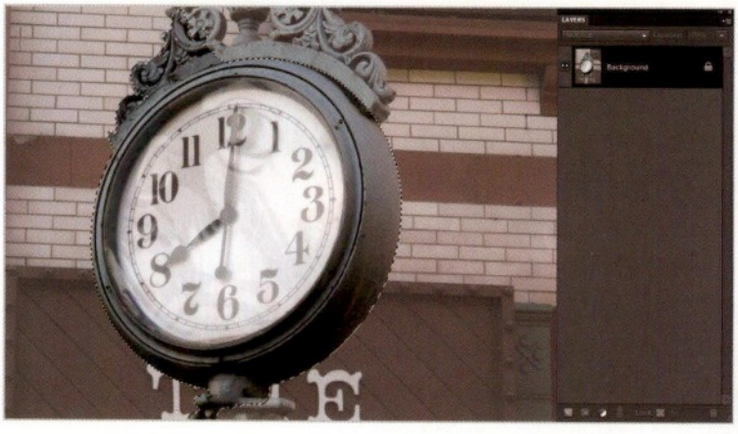
13 With each number on a separate layer, you can apply the Liquify filter to each one. Go to the Liquify interface (via Filter> Distort>Liquify) and using a small-sized brush, create different distortions.

Expert tip

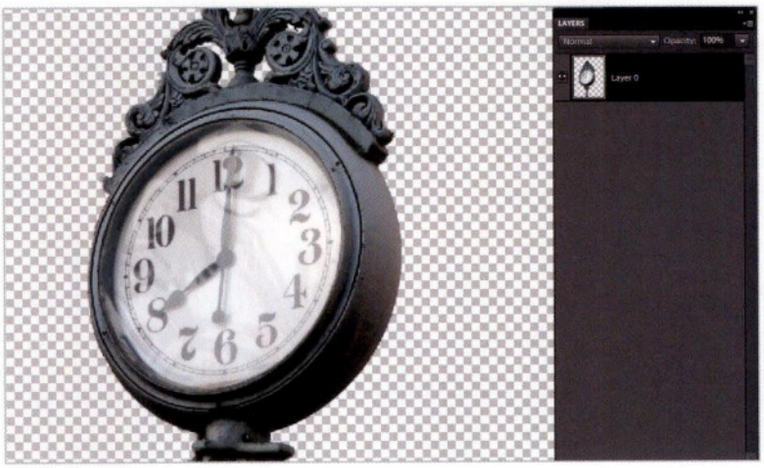
Duplicate layer styles

Layer styles enable you to quickly apply effects to an entire layer. When you apply a style to a layer, a style icon (FX) appears to the right of the layer's name. If you want to apply the same style to different layers without opening the Layer Style dialog, place the cursor over the FX icon, hold Shift+Opt/Alt and drag and drop the icon over the next layer that you want to apply the style to.

Combine selection tools Use two methods together



Another way to select the image is to combine two different selection tools, in this case the Elliptical Marquee tool and the Selection Brush tool. First use the Elliptical Marquee tool, holding Shift+Opt/Alt. Select the clock frame and then use Select>Transform Selection to precisely adjust the selection around the image to the right angle and size. Now switch to the Selection Brush tool to tweak it so you have no unwanted elements.



The Magic Extractor

Remove backgrounds with ease

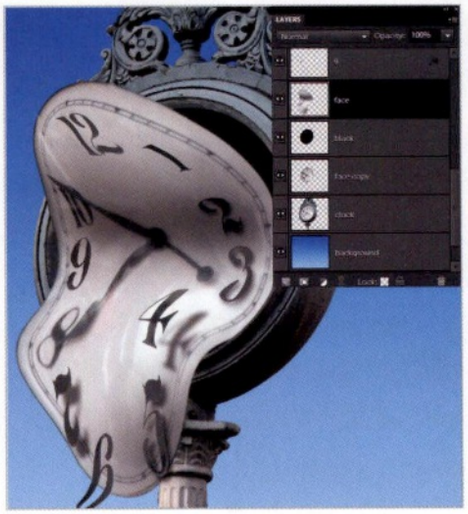
The Magic Extractor makes it easy to extract selections based on the properties of the areas that you specify. You can create accurate selections in complex areas with many details, so it's ideal for removing objects or backgrounds. Go to Image>Magic Extractor, select the Foreground Brush tool and start to scribble over the areas you want to keep in your image.

To remove the areas you don't want to keep, select the Background Brush tool and scribble over these parts, in the case of this image the clock image's background.

You can use the Zoom tool (Z) and a small brush to create a more accurate selection. When you have finished, click the Preview button to check your progress. The Eraser tool (D) will help you to remove further areas if you've missed anything. With the Magic Extractor you have many tools to create a very complex selection so try and make the most of them!

Drop shadow

14 Apply a drop shadow on some of the number layers. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings, set Angle to 130 degrees, change the Distance (it will vary for each layer) and set Opacity to 75% or 50% depending on the distance you used.

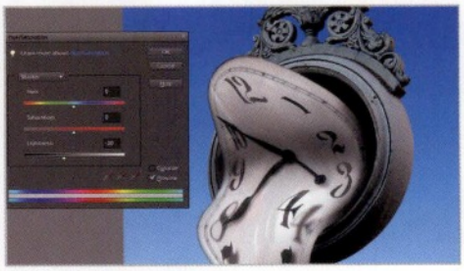


Burn tool

15 Now you can add some shadows on the clock Face layer. Using the Burn tool (O), change the range to Highlights and lower the Exposure to 10%. Using a Soft Round brush, start painting the shadows.

Select the clock hands

16 Zoom in close to the clock hands. Grab the Selection Brush tool, use a hard, small brush and carefully paint around the clock hands. After you have made the selection, copy and paste the clock hands onto a new layer using Cmd/Ctrl+J.



Merge layers

17 Hold Shift and select all the number and hand layers. Ctrl/right click on them and choose Merge Layers, naming the new single layer Numbers. Now increase the darkness of the Numbers layer by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+U to open Hue/Saturation and move the Lightness slider to the left.

Butterflies

18 Time to add the final image. Click on File>Place and open the file 'Butterflies.png.' Place the file between the Face and Black layers. Unhide and select the background's layer, go to Filter>Gaussian Blur, change the Radius to 5px and apply.

Rearrange the elements

19 This final step is optional. Select each butterfly and duplicate it. Ctrl/right-click on the butterfly layer and click Simplify Layer. Click on the Lasso tool (L), select the butterfly and, holding Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt, duplicate and rearrange the image. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate and scale.

Source images
Image: Gabi Shimizu

Photomontage edits

Discover how to use different filters and blend modes to create and edit a complex photomontage with Photoshop Elements

Creating an underwater scene is always a challenge, as there are several factors to consider when creating this kind of composition. Water changes the way that objects appear, altering the colours, the perspective, the light. In a realistic water scene, for example, objects that are far away are less in focus than the objects closer to the viewer. All these factors have an important influence on the final result.

In this tutorial you will learn how to use different blend modes to create transparency and even change colours. We will work with several filters like Plastic Wrap, Chrome and Blur to create different water effects, and we'll also make a nice composition using several images. You will be surprised how the Clouds filter can be used in different ways to create a totally new effect.

In your free resource pack you will find all the files and images you need, so open it up!

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

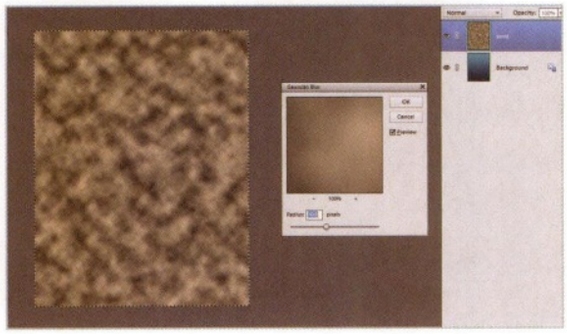
Using the Clouds filter and blend modes to create an above and underwater scene

Time taken

2 hours

Linear background

01 On the Background layer, grab the Gradient tool (G) and click on Edit to open the Gradient Editor. Create a new gradient using the colours #2196b3 and #0eb52, set it to Linear and then click OK. Now drag your gradient from top to bottom.

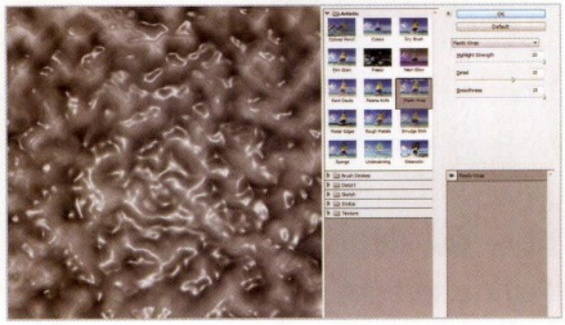


Ocean floor

02 On a new Layer, grab the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) and draw a rectangle. Change its foreground colour to #dbc5a9 and its background colour to #464545. Now head over to Filter>Render>Clouds and apply. Open the Filters menu again, go to Blur and apply a 10px Gaussian Blur.

Make some noise

03 To create a sand texture we just need to add a noise effect. Open Filter>Noise>Add Noise, set the noise Amount to 10% with Gaussian Distribution and check the Monochromatic box.



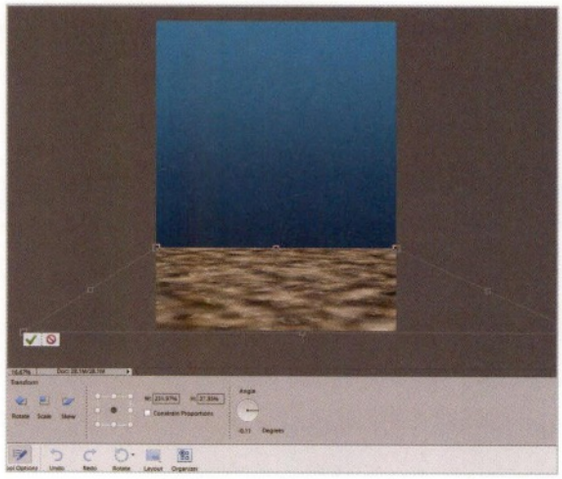
Water reflection

04 Make a new selection and set the default fore/background colours (D). Apply a Clouds filter and a 20px Gaussian Blur. Go to Filter>Artistic> Plastic Wrap and set Highlight Strength: 20, Details: 10 and Smoothness: 15. Set the blend mode to Soft Light.

Expert tip

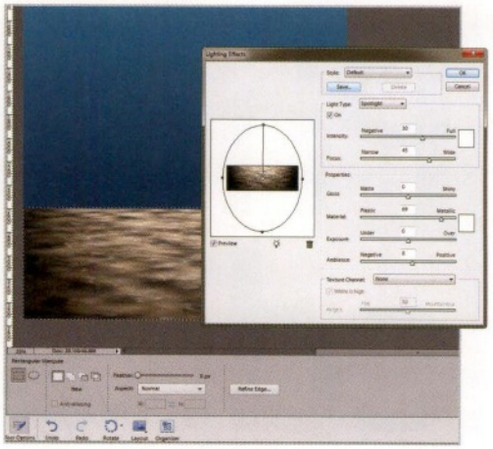
Load Brushes

Download a new brush and move the file to a folder you can easily locate. To load the brush in Photoshop Elements 11, select the Brush tool (B) and click to open the Brush Preset Picker. Click on the arrow next to the Brush pop-up and choose Load Brushes. Navigate to your downloaded file, select the brush(.abr) you want to add, then click Load.



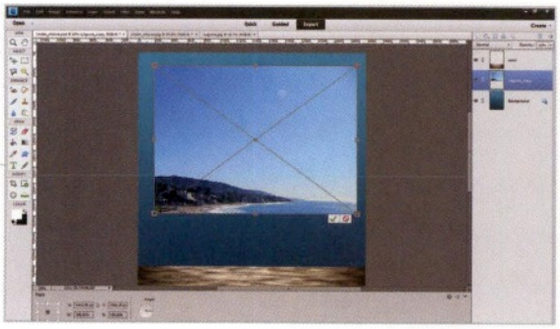
Adjust the perspective

05 Hold the Shift key and select the Reflection and the Sand layers. Right-click over the layers and chose Merge Layers. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool. Hold Cmd/Ctrl and then use each handle to skew and resize the image.



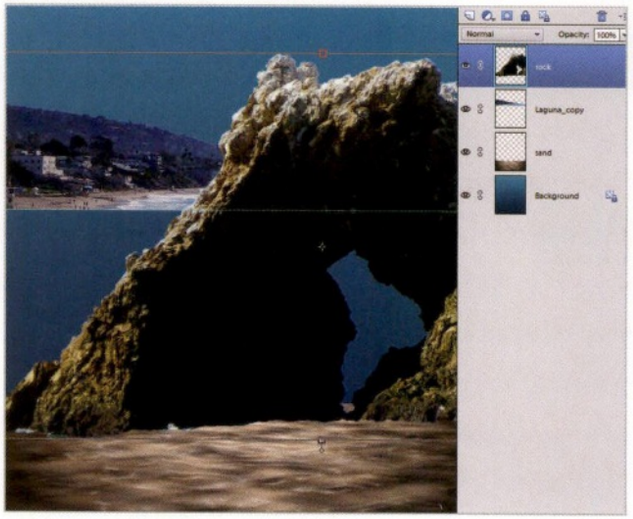
Apply lighting effects

06 Grab the Rectangular Marquee tool again and select the Sand layer. Open Filters>Render>Lighting Effects and select the Spotlight type. Rotate the light Direction to around 90º, change the Intensity to 30 and Focus to 45. Click OK.



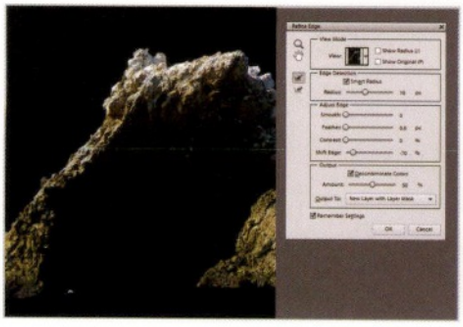
Place image

07 Now head to File>Place. Find Laguna_copy.JPEG and click Place. Resize the image and apply. Ctrl/right-click on the Laguna_copy layer and click Simplify Layer. Grab the Quick Selection tool (A) and, using a 150px brush, select and delete the sky.



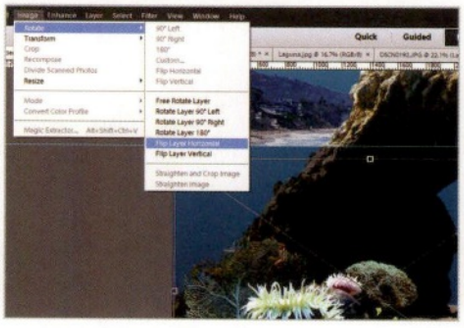
Select the rock

08 Now open up the Rock.JPEG image. In the Toolbar, click on the Quick Selection tool (A) and select only the rock image. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy and Cmd/Ctrl+V to paste it into the project. Use the Free Transform tool to scale the image.



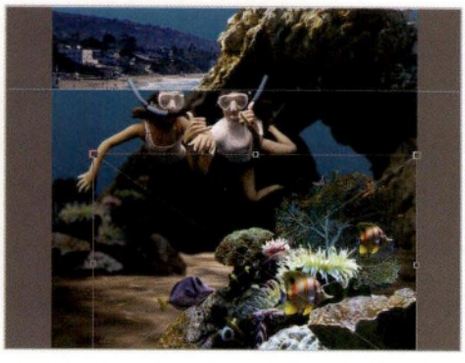
Refine selection

09 Select the Rock layer and click Select>Refine Edge. Check the Smart Radius box, set Radius to 10px and Shift Edge to -70%, then click OK. Now select around a third of the image. Click Cmd/Ctrl+U, change the Saturation to -65 and Lightness to -40. Apply an 8px Gaussian Blur.



Coral reef

10 Go to File>Place and add Coral-Reef2.PNG. Click the Constrain Proportions box and change Horizontal Scale to 40%. Go to Image>Rotate>Flip Layer Horizontal then Ctrl/right-click to Simplify Layer. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U and set Saturation: -15, Lightness: -45. Add an 8px Gaussian Blur.

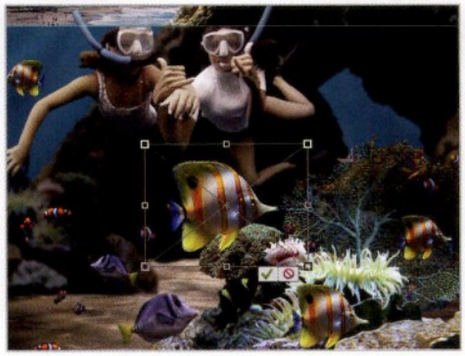


Place divers

11 Now File>Place the Divers.PNG image and scale it down to 70%. Ctrl/right-click on the layer to Simplify Layer and then hit Cmd/Ctrl+U; lower the Saturation to -60. Following the same steps, find and place the Coral Reef.PNG image, scaling it to 60%.

Create light rays

12 On a new layer, grab the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) and draw a selection. Select the default foreground/background colours (D) and apply Filter>Render>Clouds. Now head to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur, changing the Angle to 90º and Distance to 998px. Change the layer's blend mode to Soft Light.

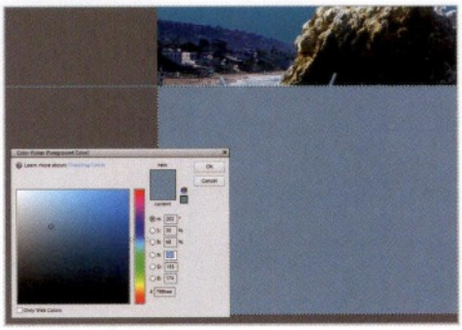


Adding Nemo

13 In your resource pack, you will find all the PNG files you need for this step. Using the same techniques that you've just learned, place each image onto a different layer and then scale, invert and reposition all around. When you're finished, hold Cmd/Ctrl to select the layers and then merge all.

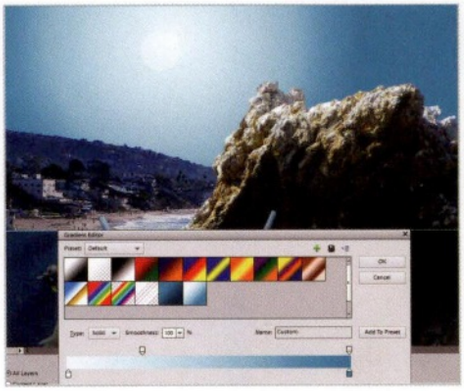
Bubbles

14 Download Bubble Brushes for Photoshop from (www.brusheezy.com/brushes/1283-bubble-brushes-for-photoshop) Select the Brush tool (B) and open the Brush Preset Picker. Now open bubble #690. In the brush's settings, pick a small brush Size, then change the Scatter to 50 and Spacing to 175%. Draw the bubbles.



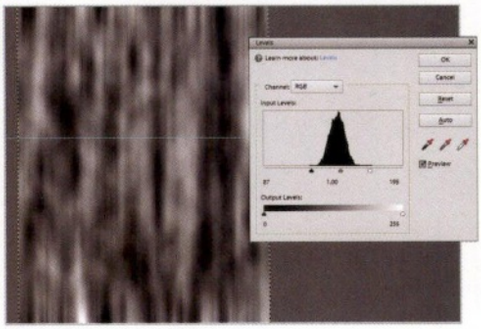
Transparent layer

15 Create a new layer. Using the Rectangular Marquee tool (M), select the underwater part of your image. Select the colour #799bae and use the Paint Bucket tool (G) to fill the selection. Change the layer's blend mode to Multiply – this will create a nice transparent blue effect.



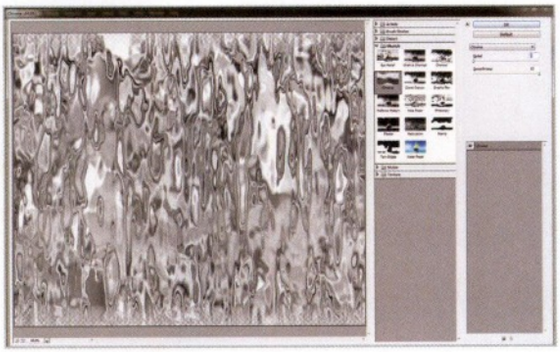
Create the sun

16 Click on the Background layer. Hit M and then select the part above the water. Grab the Gradient tool (G) and create a Radial gradient using #ffffff to #2692b0, then click OK and drag it outwards.



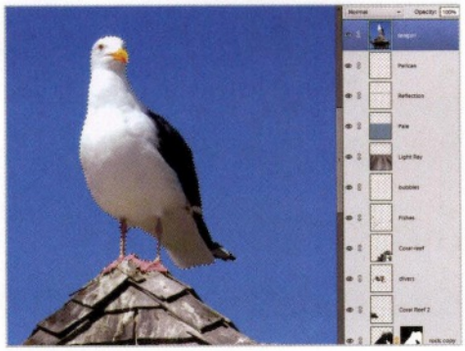
Water reflection

17 Add a new layer. Hit M and make a selection, using default foreground/background colours. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds and then apply Motion Blur, setting the Angle to 90º and Distance to 275px. Open Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and increase the contrast by moving the arrows left to right.



Chrome effect

18 Now let's add the chrome effect to the water reflection. Go to Filter>Sketch>Chrome, setting Detail to 0 and Smoothness to 10, and click OK. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to scale and rotate. Go to Filter>Distort>Liquify and use the Turbulence tool to create some distortions. Change the blend mode to Hard Light.



Final step

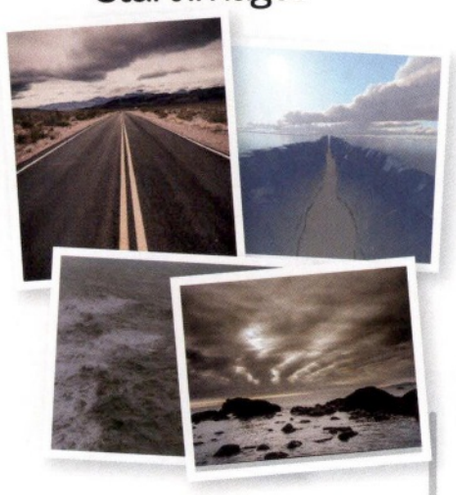
19 Open Seagull.JPEG and pelican.JPEG from your resources. With the Quick Selection tool (A), select the images then cut (Cmd/Ctrl+C) and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) into the project. Use the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to resize the images.

Expert tip

Create a silhouette

When you're on step 16, you can add a nice silhouette over the gradient background. Create a new layer and click Shapes (U), then select the Ellipse shape, setting Color to white and Geometry Options to Circle. Check the From Center box and draw a circle over the centre of the radial gradient, then click on simplify. Finally, change the layer's Opacity to 30%. Now we have a nice silhouette that shows more of the sun's details.

Start images



Create incredible composites

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to blend photos together, paint with the Brush and Smudge tools and use adjustments

Time taken

4 hours

Learn to make a dynamic and dramatic composite image with photographs and digital painting techniques

Picture the scene – a dramatic rift in the sea, a vast chasm with waterfalls for walls and a misty roadway running through the middle. Undoubtedly, a dramatic scene like that would be worth taking a photograph of, but we'd guess that the chances of seeing one in the real world are fairly slim! There is a solution, though, you could create one yourself using a few quality stock photos and a spot of Photoshop know-how.

It will inevitably involve some time-consuming and fairly advanced techniques, but the payoff is the quality of the final image and the tricks and techniques learned. Digital painting is one such technique that might take a while to get used to but will make a huge difference to your art.

There are a few different ways to achieve painterly results, such as the Smudge tool, which is great for quickly painting over layers that you want to blend together, and can be used just like a brush. The painting stage is crucial to make a compelling image like this and will take your artwork beyond straightforward photo editing and into the realms of the seemingly impossible. Good luck, and don't forget to show off your creations!

Breakdown Achieve the effect

Here are the four key stages you'll reach to create the final image

MAKING WALLS OF WATER

Shelves of water are made from a photo using Vanishing Point and the Smudge tool for touch-ups.

CREATE ATMOSPHERE

Simulate atmospheric density in the distance by creating layers of haze and colour to achieve a photo-realistic look for the sky and sea.

ILLUSION OF DEPTH

With a distinct foreground, middle and background, the image begins to come together with a feeling of depth.

DETAILS AND DYNAMISM

Adding details and tweaking the overall tone of the image comes in the final steps, where you can boost the atmosphere and create mood with realistic detail.

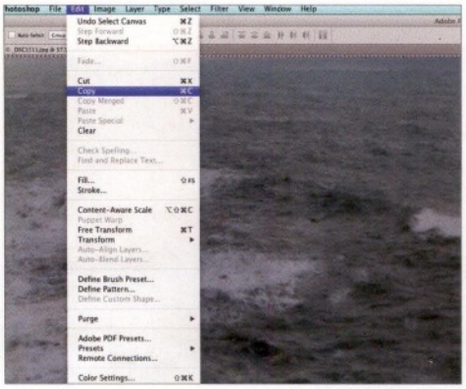
Expert tip

The CS6 interface

The new structure in CS6 splits the functionality that used to be held only in the Adjustments palette into two palettes; Adjustments and Properties. The Adjustments palette is compact enough to make it easy to have open when working on anything and makes creating new adjustment layers easy, saving time hunting through the menus. The Properties palette comes into the workflow once you've chosen your adjustment and applied it to the image. When an icon is clicked, the Properties palette opens, giving you full control of the adjustment layer and layer mask options.

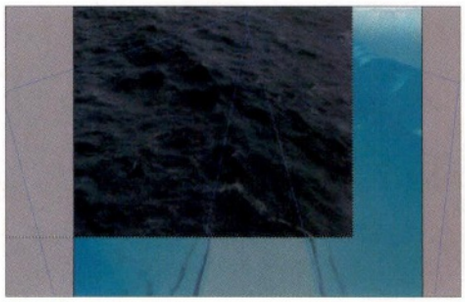
Foundations

01 This starting image was created in a 3D modelling program. You can download free trial versions (such as Vue Infinite from **www.e-on software.com**) and have a go at creating your own basic sea walls. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, though, open 'walls.tif' from the supplied files. This base layer will act as a guide to give a rough idea of composition and won't be visible in the final image.



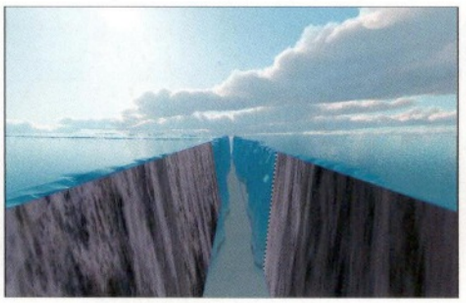
A sea wall

02 Open up the supplied image 'sea water.jpg' or find a seascape image you prefer. Go to Select>All (Cmd/Ctrl+A) and press Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy the image. If you're using Elements, consider creating an extended version by widening the canvas, copying the image, placing the copies next to each other and blending them with masks to create a long seascape.



Vanishing Point filter

03 Back in 'Walls.tif', make a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and use the tools in Filter>Vanishing Point (Edit> Transform>Perspective in Elements) to create a plane along the right wall. Click in four places to set the corners and paste the water (Cmd/Ctrl+V). Repeat for the left wall.

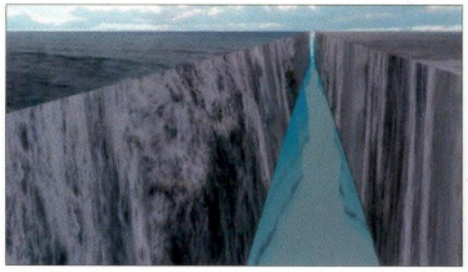


Drag and drop

04 Drag the pasted seascape images into the two planes and use the Transform tool (T), rotating and flipping until you get a look that you like. To extend the sea wall, paste the water image again and drag and transform along the plane, varying the position to avoid give-away patterns.

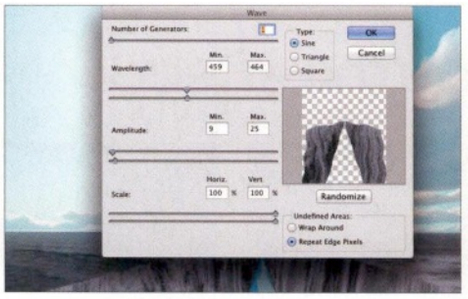
Retouching in perspective

05 Still within the Vanishing Point interface, press S for the Stamp tool, set Hardness to 25%, Opacity to 100% and turn Heal to On. Opt/Alt-click on the water to sample a colour from it, then brush over the edges of the duplicated seascapes, blending the images (in Elements, the healing should be done before using the transform tools). Hit OK to apply.



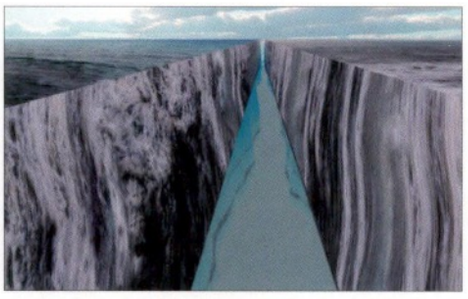
Filling the sea

06 Paste the seascape onto a new layer, this time for the horizontal plane. Use Edit>Transform>Distort so it meets the vertical wall on one side. Duplicate this layer, go to Transform>Flip Horizontal and align it according to your composition. Create layer masks to control any overlap.



Making waves

07 On both layers for the water wall, use Filter>Distort>Wave with the Number of Generators set to 1, Wavelength around 450 for both values and Amplitude between 0 and 50. Using Edit>Transform>Warp can also work for this wavy effect.



First adjustments

08 Create a new Curves adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer> Curves) for each water layer, and clip the adjustment to the layers by Opt/Alt-clicking on the line between them. Adjust the contrast and colour until it looks right.

Paint with Smudge

09 Create a new layer above the sea and select the Smudge tool (R). Check Sample All Layers and set a medium strength in the Options bar. Smudge over the edge where the sea and water wall meet, using various sizes and pressures. This step is easier with a graphics tablet and can be quite time consuming, so be patient.

Bring in the sky

10 Open 'ocean sky.jpg' and drag it in. Make a guide at the horizon line (View>New Guide) and move the sky so that the horizons align. Create a layer mask, set the colour swatches to black and white and use the Gradient tool (G) to mask out the foreground by clicking and dragging from the bottom of your image up.

Match the tones

11 Make a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to bring the colour of the sky to match the water and a Curves adjustment layer to bring the tones of the sky and water closer together.

Blue haze

12 On a new layer, set the blend mode to Color and paint blue over parts of the ocean and sky to blend in the colours further with a basic Brush tool (B). Using the same colour on another new layer, use a soft, low-opacity brush to paint atmospheric haze around the horizon line.

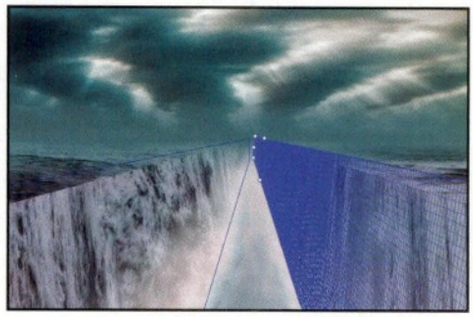
Create the road

13 Open up 'road.jpg', or any stock road image, and drag it into your document. Make another layer mask on the road photo and use the Gradient tool to remove the sky. Place it below the water walls in the layer stack and transform it to fit in the chasm.

Roadscaping

14 Don't be afraid to transform, modify, retouch or cut up your road layer to get the perfect effect for your piece. Once the road is assembled, create a Levels adjustment layer to match it to the tones in the rest of the image.

The essential tools

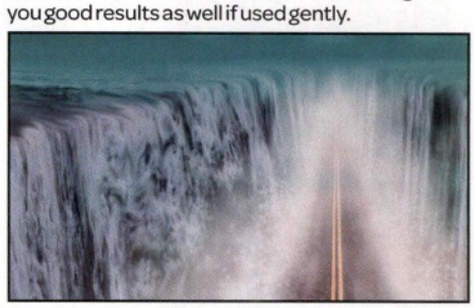


Vanishing Point

The Vanishing Point filter is a powerful tool for editing in perspective, including transforming, healing and aligning along any plane. It's as easy as clicking and dragging the bounding box.

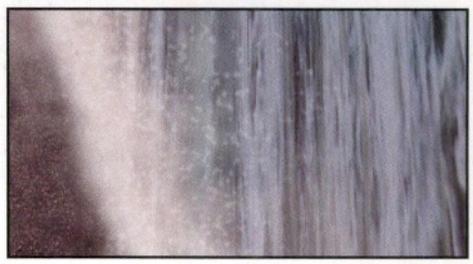
Transform and Warp

Edit>Transform>Warp both water walls to give them a wavy look. Filter>Distort>Wave can give you good results as well if used gently.



Smudge tool

Smudge is an easy way to create a painterly look without actually doing any painting. The brush tip you set it to is up to you, but generally go for something soft. Set to Sample All Layers in the Options bar and paint a wavy curve over the edge where the wall meets the sea.



Brush tool

Depending on your computer's strength, you may spend a lot of time smudging and brushing to blend the water and create mist, but having patience with this is the key; you can't rush art!

Expert tip

Use the rule of thirds

The rule of thirds, golden ratio and golden spiral are rules of design aesthetics that many graphic artists and painters use. It is generally thought that images that follow the geometric guidelines that they provide are more pleasing to the eye. They tend to put the image focus off centre and allow for more than one main subject in a composition. Consider composing your image along one of these guidelines, which can easily be pulled up for quick viewing under the Crop tool's Crop Guide Overlay drop-down menu.

Populate the scene

15 Open some images of cars and drag them into the document. Transform them to fit into the lanes, make a layer mask for each car and paint away the areas you want hidden using a fairly hard brush. Work at 100% Opacity to ensure it's accurate.

Traffic adjustments

16 Make a Curves adjustment layer for each car layer, ensuring accurate blending with the road. Clip the adjustment by Opt/Alt-clicking between each layer and its adjustment to limit the effects to the cars.

Ocean spray

17 Select the Brush tool and go to Window>Brush. Select one of the Dry Brush tips and set the Spacing to 59% to create the effect of spray. With white, gently brush along the edges of the ocean floor using varying brush sizes and opacity values. Sometimes a single click is all that's necessary.

Brush in depth

18 Reset your brushes (via Reset Brushes in the fly-out menu) and use a soft, low-opacity brush set to white and varying sizes to paint in spray and mist becoming denser in the distance. Use small brush sizes for distant work and larger for closer.

Sea stacks

19 Open up 'rocks 1.jpg', 'rocks 2.jpg' or a stock image with nice-looking rocks, and select and make masks to cut out the ones that you want to place into your composition. Arrange them in your document along the edges of the rift.

Tweak the tones

20 Create Hue/Saturation and Curves adjustment layers for each rock to bring their colour and tones up to match that of the rest of the image. Clip them to their rock layers as you did before with the cars to limit the adjustment.

Expert tip

The Brush palette

The Brush palette and all the settings and options that it has within it extend beyond just the Brush tool, and can also be applied to the Smudge, Stamp, Healing Brush, History Brush, Eraser, Burn and Dodge tools. This can give you amazingly precise control over every brush-like function you could want. Combine the options with the use of a pressure-sensitive graphics tablet if you have one, and you will be a painting force to be reckoned with.

Rock shadows

21 Make one more clipped Curves adjustment layer for each rock, and pull the curve down to darken it dramatically, creating a shadowy look. On the layer's mask, paint away the shadow effect around the edges of the rocks with a low-opacity brush.

Paint on splashes

22 On a new layer (or maybe a few), paint with a white, low-opacity brush around the bottom of the rocks where they meet the water to give a hazy, misty effect, as if the water is splashing around them.

Shadowing

23 Make some more Curves adjustment layers on top of the stack, one for darkening and one for lightening. Paint in the highlights and shadows according to the direction of the light source.

Atmospherics

24 Create a Photo Filter adjustment layer and use a Warming Filter to give the image a colour cast. Make a Curves adjustment layer and pull the curve down to darken the image and then, with the mask selected, drag a white-to-black gradient down from the top for a more dramatic sky.

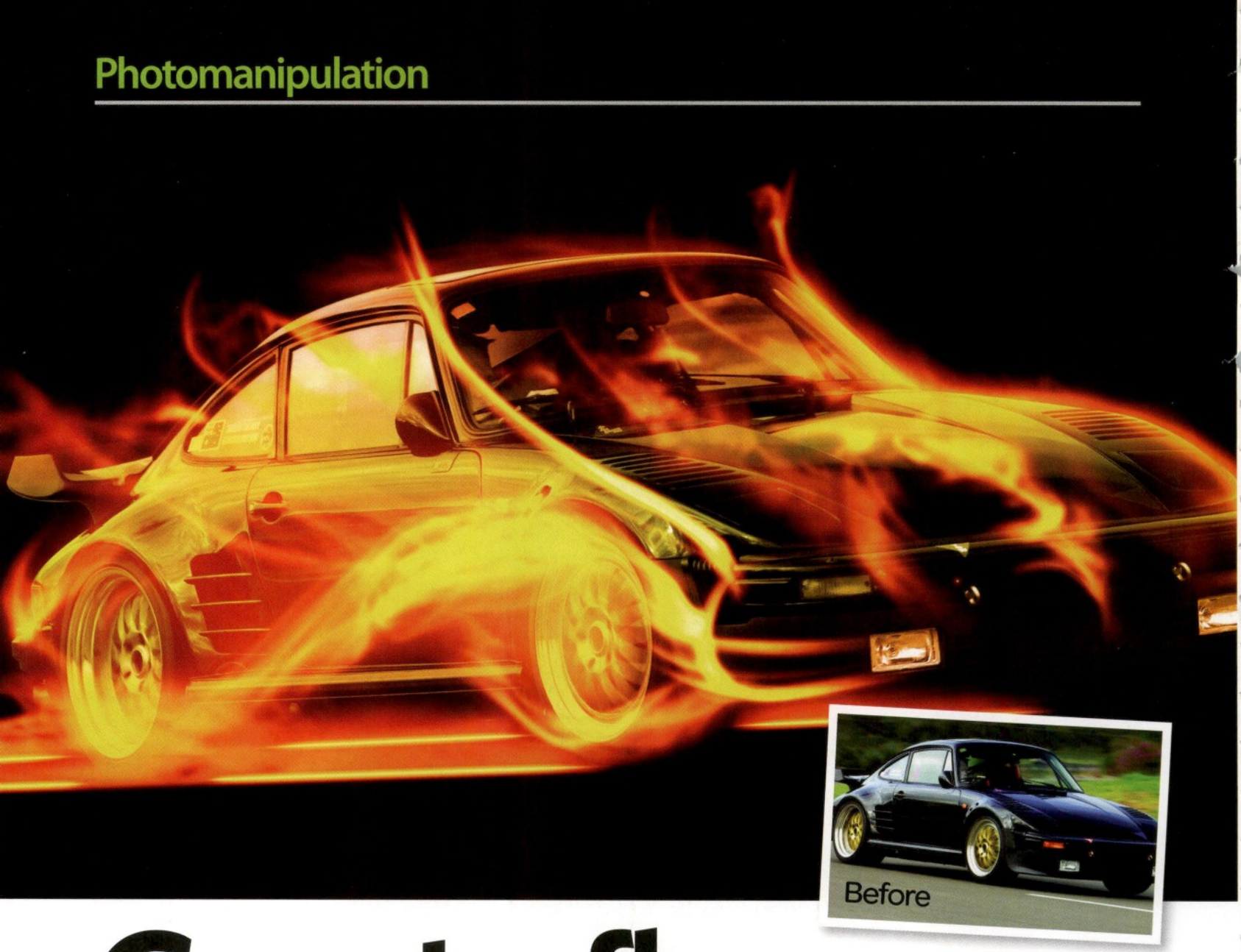
Finishing touches

25 Create a new adjustment layer to tweak the overall contrast, and set the blend mode to Luminosity. Fine-tune the colour with Hue/Saturation or Selective Color adjustment layers, and add some drama with a vignette, painting softly around the edges with a black brush.

Closer look Believable photocomposites

It's all about the details when it comes to stitching images together

OCEAN SPRAY
Selecting the right brush to create spray isn't too difficult, as Photoshop gives us plenty of Dry Brush tips to work with
Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
TRAFFIC PERSPECTIVE
Make sure you take into account the perspective of the road and the car photos that you use. If they're not perfectly in sync, that's okay, just use Transform>Perspective
PAINTING WITH SMUDGE
The Smudge tool works very similarly to the Brush, even sharing the different brush tips and modifiers that can be found in the Brush window, giving us versatile painting ability
NOT IN KANSAS ANY MORE
Where on earth do you see a rift in the sea? This isn't Kansas any more, so go wild with creativity! Change the image from earthly norms, making worlds of your own with different colours and natural elements
ATTENTION TO LIGHTING
Getting the lighting just right on the rocks is a matter of taking into account sun direction and rock shape. Round rocks will spread more light, while jagged edges will cast harsher shadows



Create flames

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to create fire by using the Brush tool, layer styles, Pen tool and adjustment layers

Time taken

3 hours

Turn up the heat and learn how to add fire to your photos

Creating fire in Photoshop is easier than it looks and the effect requires not much more than a smoky brush and a brightly coloured layer style. We've taken the idea one step further and have applied it to a car. You can grab this image from your disc, or use any object from your own image library.

Creating movement with the careful placement of each fiery layer is vital. The idea is to make it seem like a vehicle speeding through flames, rather than a static car that has caught on fire. Fiery trails under the wheels add to this sense of movement. These, combined with multiple wisps of flame rolling off the top of the car, really heat things up.

The colour of the fire is formed with a combination of layer styles and a Gradient Fill layer. This means we can create the intense yellow-orange flame and make the whole image glow at the same time for a really dynamic effect. Prepare for an onslaught of layers as each flame was applied to a new one for editing and shaping over the car.

The first steps in this tutorial use the Pen tool to cut out the car from its original background. The Pen tool is one of the most accurate methods for doing this, but others such as Quick Selection can be just as effective. After this, the image is placed on a black background, ready to be set alight!

Create flames

Form a path

01 Open the start image of the car from your disc. Select the Pen tool and make a new path around the car. Be sure to zoom in close to see the edges clearly when marking your path.

Turn in selection

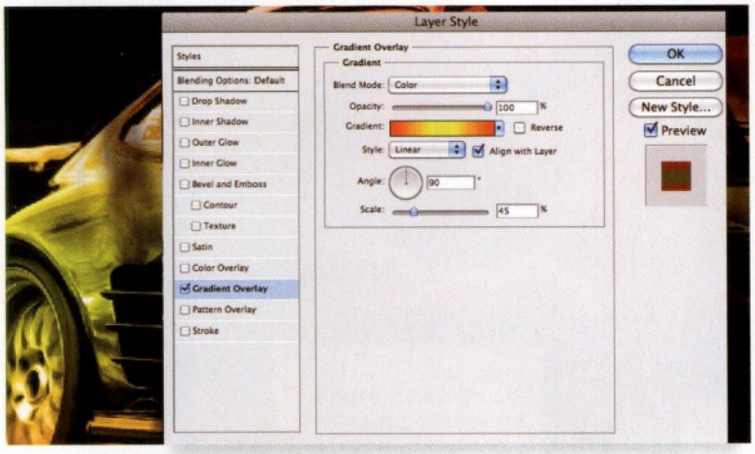
02 When you've marked a complete path around the entire car and have joined the ends, Ctrl/right-click on the car and choose Make Selection. This will turn the path into an editable selected area.

Inverse selection

03 Double-click on the Background layer in the Layers palette to unlock it (the lock symbol should disappear). Hit Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I to inverse this so that the background area is selected.

Fill the area

04 Go into the Edit menu and down to Fill. Choose Black from Contents and hit OK. Press Ctrl/Cmd+D to remove the selection from the image, as it will no longer be needed. The car should now be on a black background.



Gradient Overlay style

05 Double-click its layer to open the Layer Style menu. Click on the Gradient Overlay option in the list of Styles and change the blend mode to Color and Opacity to 100%. For the gradient itself, select an orange to yellow to orange colour transition. Set Scale to 45% and hit OK.

Load brushes

06 Head to **http://tinyurl.com/pxsrjm** and download Colorburned's free 42 Smoke Effect Brushes set. Open up your Brushes palette and go to the Load Brushes option. The brushes should now appear inside the palette.

Expert tip

The Warp command

The Warp command, found by navigating to Edit>Transform, is helpful to bend and shape each smoke brush into place around your car. As long as each of the fiery smoke tips is applied to a new layer as you go, you can warp these shapes to fit your scene and create a real sense of movement. Also in the Edit menu is the Free Transform command. You can use this to tweak the size of the brush shapes – and even rotate them – to fit precisely into the right place. The combination of Warp and Free Transform can be used all the way through this tutorial.

Stamp smoke

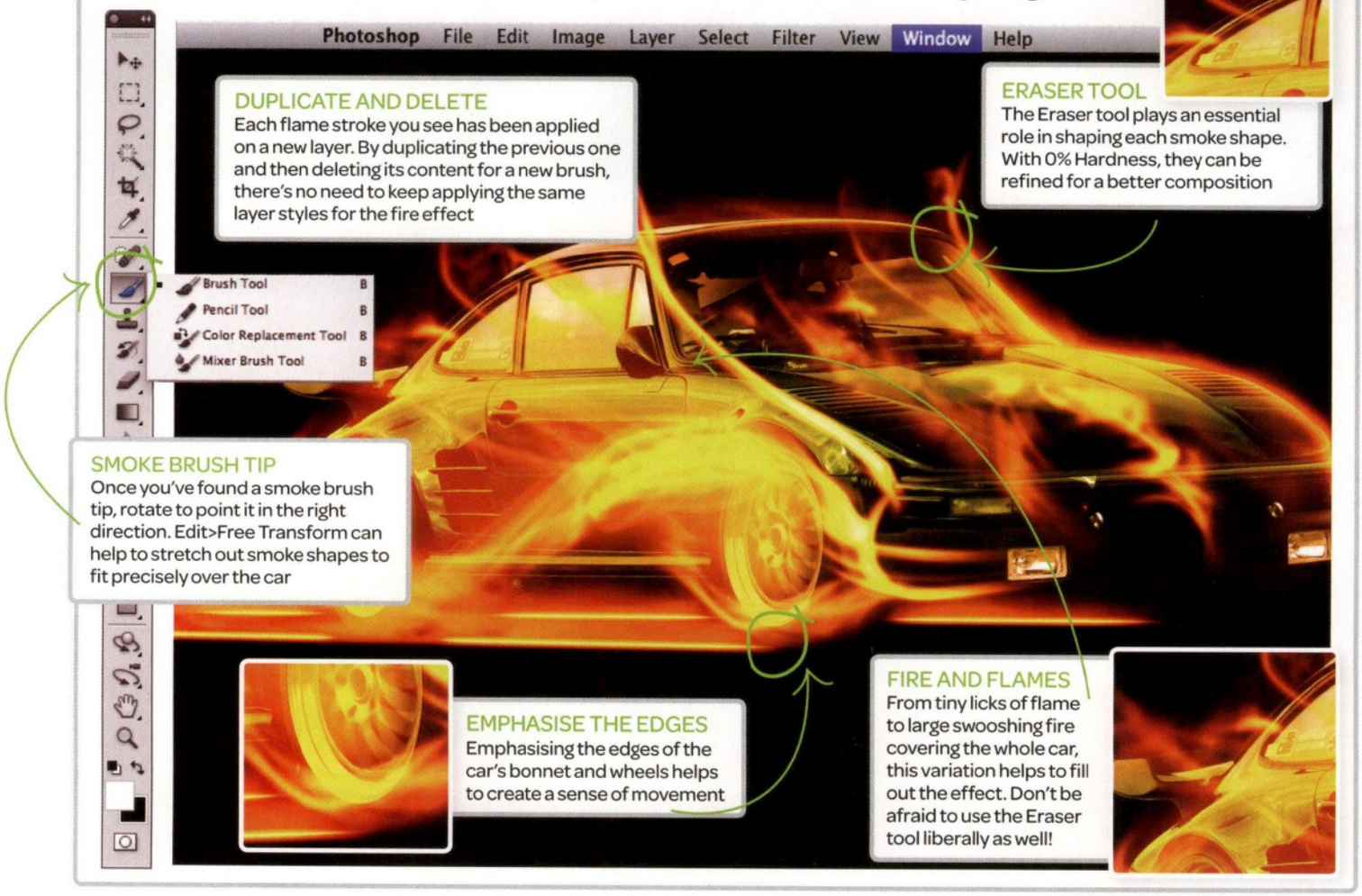
07 Create a new layer above the car and set your Foreground colour to black. Stamp one of the smoky brushes over the middle of the car. It'll be hard to see at this moment but don't worry, that's how it's supposed to be. Double-click on its layer to open the Layer Style options.

Outer Glow

08 Add the Outer Glow style and set its blend mode to Hard Light with a Size of 18px. Click on the gradient option and set the colour transition to white, yellow and orange. The Range needs to be set to 58%. The effect will look strange at this stage.

Closer look Examine the fire effect

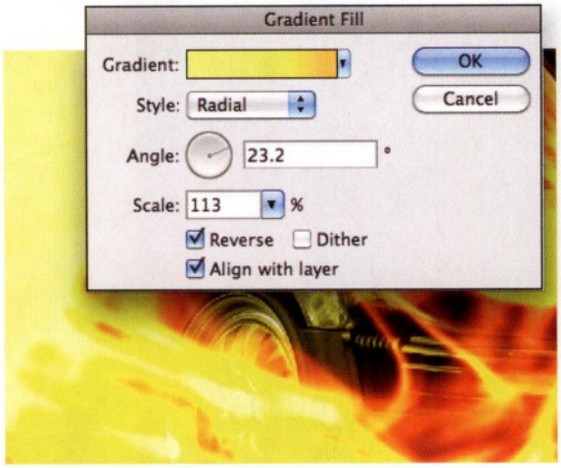
Take a look at the key tools and techniques to build your own flaming image


Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
Brush Tool B
Pencil Tool B
Color Replacement Tool B
Mixer Brush Tool B
DUPLICATE AND DELETE
Each flame stroke you see has been applied on a new layer. By duplicating the previous one and then deleting its content for a new brush, there's no need to keep applying the same layer styles for the fire effect
ERASER TOOL
The Eraser tool plays an essential role in shaping each smoke shape. With 0% Hardness, they can be refined for a better composition
SMOKE BRUSH TIP
Once you've found a smoke brush tip, rotate to point it in the right direction. Edit>Free Transform can help to stretch out smoke shapes to fit precisely over the car
EMPHASISE THE EDGES
Emphasising the edges of the car's bonnet and wheels helps to create a sense of movement
FIRE AND FLAMES
From tiny licks of flame to large swooshing fire covering the whole car, this variation helps to fill out the effect. Don't be afraid to use the Eraser tool liberally as well!

Expert tip

Liquify the flames

Use the Liquify filter to push and pull the flames to sit tighter over the car. Because they are on separate layers, they can be edited independently. For example, the long strips of fire on the bonnet were bent using the Forward Warp tool in the filter, and the flames around the wheels were also shaped into place. Because of the blurry nature of fire, adding distortion barely shows, so you can afford to be heavy-handed with the filter.

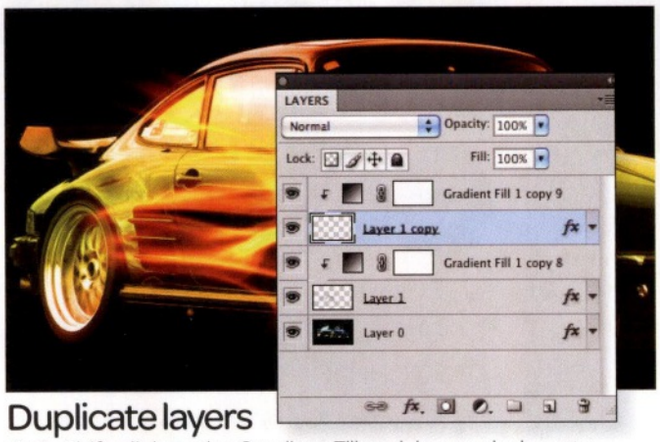


Gradient Fill layer

09 Go to the Layer menu and down to New Fill Layer>Gradient. A new layer should appear so now go back to Layer>Create Clipping Mask. Open the Gradient Editor and select yellow to orange.

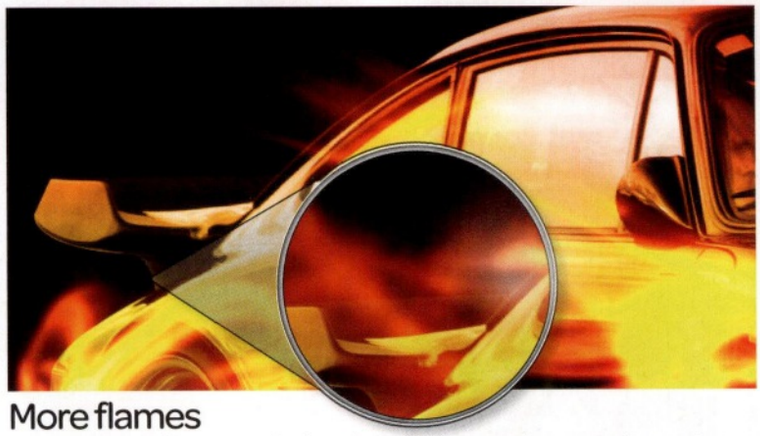
Place smoke layer

10 Set the Eraser tool's size to 600px, and lower its Hardness to 0%. Erase the hard edges of the smoke until you have a more realistic shape. Position and rotate the smoke using Edit>Free Transform over an area of the car such as the front wheel.



Duplicate layers

11 Shift-click on the Gradient Fill and the smoke layer to highlight both in the Layers palette. Duplicate them and, on the duplicate layer containing the fire brush, hit Ctrl/Cmd+A to select the contents and then hit Backspace to delete.



More flames

12 Pick a different smoke brush tip and stamp that onto the car in another position. Because the Gradient Fill layer and the layer style are already in place, the brush should look like fire. Use a large soft-edged Eraser to remove parts of the smoke to fit better around the car.

Engulf with fire

13 Repeat this process of duplicating the Gradient Fill and flame layers, Ctrl/Cmd+A and deleting its content. This simply saves time reapplying the settings for the fire effect for each brush. Apply new brushes to new layers until you've covered the car.

Fiery trails

14 To create the fire trails under the car, this time use a Soft Round brush. A small Diameter of 7px is all that's required. You'll need to hold Shift while painting to create a perfectly straight line, then rotate the line using Edit>Free Transform and position under the wheels.

Heat things up

15 Create two fire trails for each side of the car. With a soft Eraser tool, remove parts of the trail directly under the wheels. Additional smoke brushes can be added to the fiery strips to help create a sense of movement.

Vivid photo edits

Use surreal lighting effects and beautiful brushwork to create a magical portrait image

The power of Photoshop lies in its ability to transform the simplest of snapshots into professional-looking and commercially viable artwork in just a few steps.

By using basic tools and simple techniques you can create a complex image that looks like it took days but was really created in a matter of hours! This entire portrait piece was formed using one single, soft-edged brush and a few basic stock photos, which are supplied free with this tutorial. A few different adjustment layers were used along with one blend mode.

The main concept to grasp in this tutorial is how to mask effectively. Entirely mask out an image, an adjustment layer or a colour fill, and then use your brush to reveal only the areas that you want to show through. This will give your piece a sense of originality and separate your art from other images that might be built purely on software-automated effects. You will end up with a personal and much more appealing result.

While we've supplied a range of images, this effect can work with your own photographs, so make sure you experiment with different images to achieve different effects. Make sure you upload your best images to the internet to show them off!.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

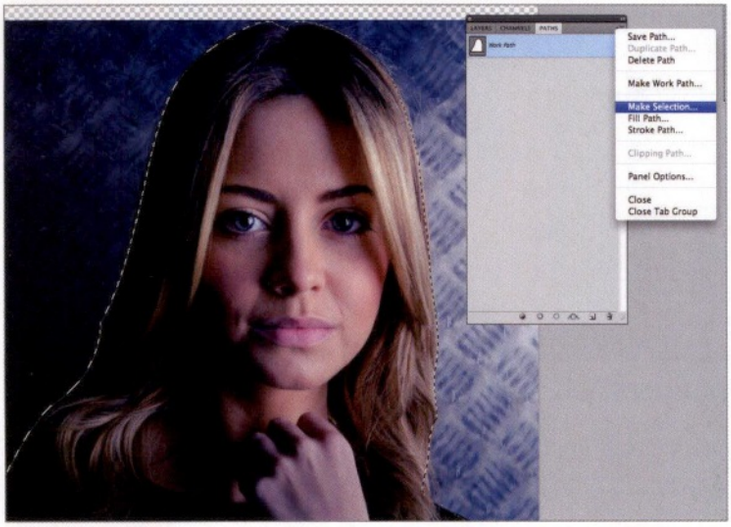
Essentials

What you'll learn

You'll learn key tips for compositing, how to play with blend modes and adjustment layers

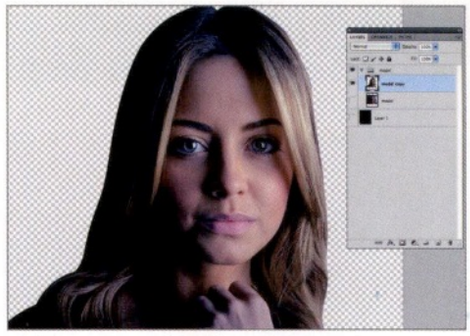
Time taken

4 hours



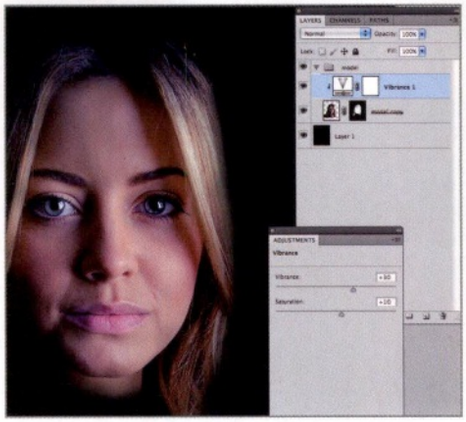
Cut out the model

01 Begin by choosing the Pen tool (P) to outline the model's head in your photograph. Go to the Paths palette, highlight your new path and choose Make Selection from the fly-out menu (or click the Load Path as Selection icon at the bottom).



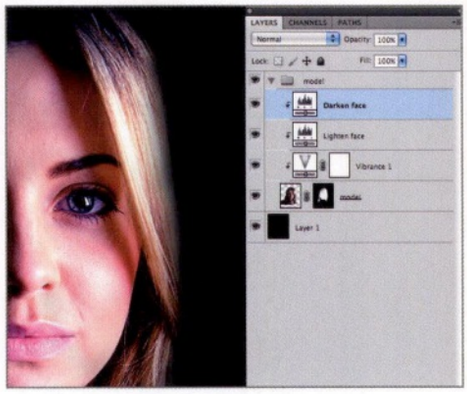
Sharpen the image

02 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to lift the selected model onto a new layer. Go to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask and set the Amount to 70% and the Radius to 4 to get her looking as crisp as possible.



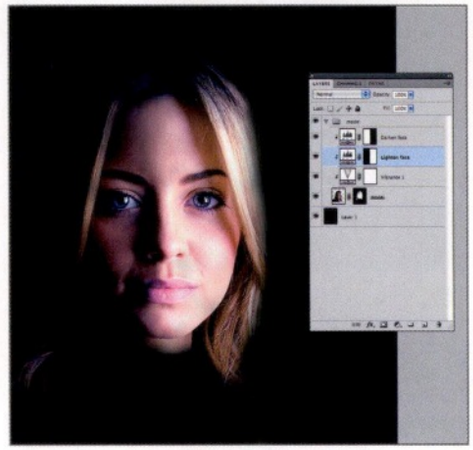
Add vibrance

03 We want a little vibrance in our life, so choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance. Click the box for Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask in the Vibrance dialog and set the Vibrance slider to 30 and the Saturation to 10.



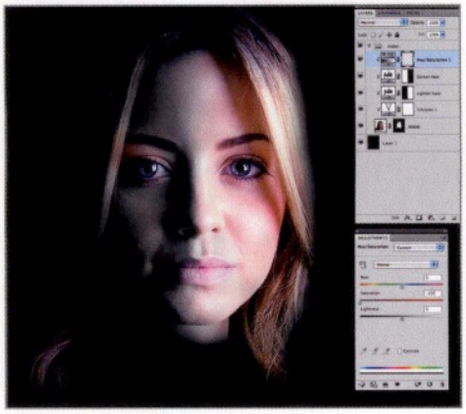
Light the face

04 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels and check Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask again. Set the input sliders to 5, 1.25 and 200 to lighten the face. Repeat this and add a second Levels adjustment set to 30, 0.85, and 255 for a contrasting, darkening effect.



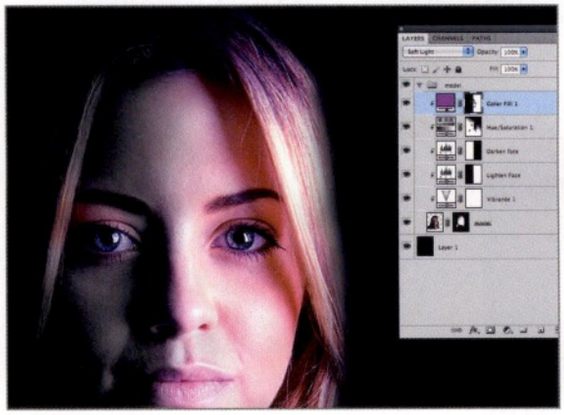
Create dramatic shadows

05 Press Add Vector Mask for both of your Levels adjustments. Using the Brush tool (B) set to white to mask and black to reveal, mask out the left side of the lighten layer and the right side of the darken one.



Set the hue

06 Adding a Hue/Saturation layer will give colours a boost. Pull the Saturation slider to -100. Add a layer mask then, with a soft, black brush, paint on the mask to reveal subtle areas of colour.



Create a colour fill layer

07 To inject even more colour, go to Layer> New Fill Layer>Solid Color. Choose a shade of purple, for example R:160, G:80, B:155. Set this layer to the Soft Light blend mode and again add a layer mask and paint on it to reveal subtle areas of colour.

Expert tip

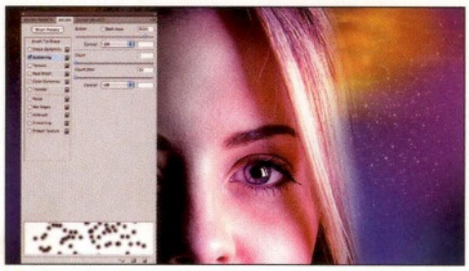
Creating comets

For an alternative to motion blur, try using the Wind filter on your image. In the case of our portrait, we used this feature to turn the star field into shooting comets.

Go to Filter>Stylize>Wind. Click Wind under Method and set Direction as From the Left or From the Right and click OK. Keep pressing Cmd/Ctrl+F to reapply until you are satisfied with the result. Erase or paint out the areas you don't want the effect to be applied to using a layer mask as in previous steps.

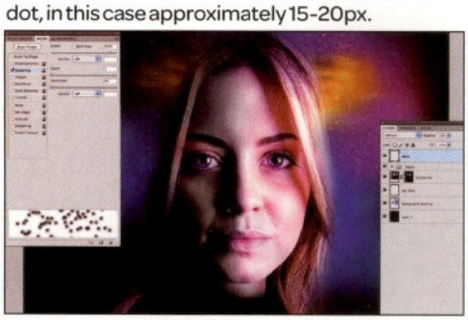
Scatter some stars

Add a cosmic flourish to your artwork



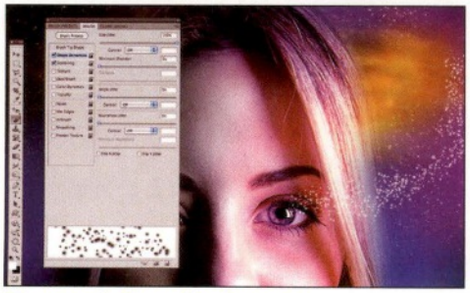
Select your brush

To create a star field, first choose a soft-edged brush and set the Foreground colour to white. Decrease the size of the brush to a small white dot, in this case approximately 15-20px.



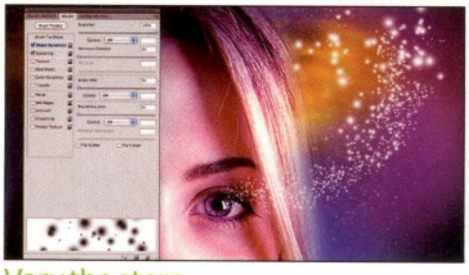
Set the scattering

Go to Window>Brush to open the Brush palette. Under the Brush Tip Shape option, check the Scattering box and pull the slider for Scattering to 900%. Leave the Count at 1 and Jitter at 0%.



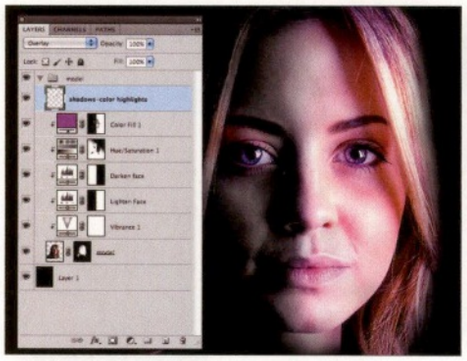
Dynamic brush shapes

Under Brush Tip Shape, check the Shape Dynamic box and pull the slider for Size Jitter to 100%. Paint with the brush and you will see tiny white stars scattering across the image.



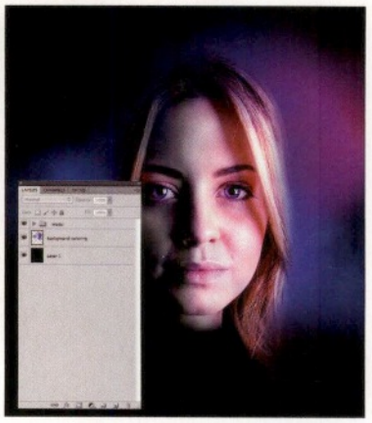
Vary the stars

While the Size Jitter will give you a variation in the size of the stars, you can increase or decrease the size of your brush to give some variation. There are many other applications for this brush feature including painting textures such as clouds.



Paint light and shadows

08 This step is all about shading. Make a new layer with the blend mode set to Overlay and, with a soft brush at 25% Opacity, paint over the image. Use the Opt/Alt key as you go to sample darker tones from the area you want to add more shadow to, and lighter ones for the highlights.

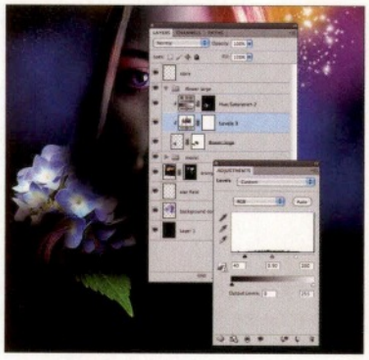


Background colouring

09 Make a new layer and, again with a soft brush, paint some colour behind the model. Use shades of purple and pink, and drop in a sunset image.

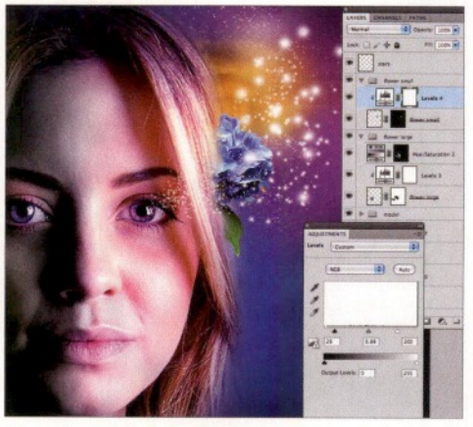
Create star fields

10 Create a new layer called Stars. Choose a soft-edged white brush set to 100% Opacity and under Window>Brush check Scattering. Pull the Scatter slider to 900%, check Shape Dynamics and pull the Size Jitter slider to 100%.



Hair flowers

11 Drop in the supplied image of the blue flower. Add a Levels adjustment layer with input sliders set to 40, 0.90 and 255. Add a Hue/Saturation layer with Lightness pulled to -50 and mask out areas of shadow on the flower.



Scale down details

12 Drop in another flower image and go to Edit>Transform>Scale (or press Cmd/Ctrl+T) and scale down to 45%. Again add a Levels adjustment layer with the input sliders set to 28, 0.88, and 200.

Add vector lines

13 Drop in the supplied image 'vector lines.ai' just above the crown of your model's head. Add a layer mask and paint out the areas you don't want. Use your own judgement to decide which parts work.

Set layer style

14 Double-click on the vector lines' layer to bring up the Layer Style dialog. Check Color Overlay and highlight it to see the options. Click the colour swatch and select a hue, in this case we opted for R:205, G:95, B:180.

Add butterflies

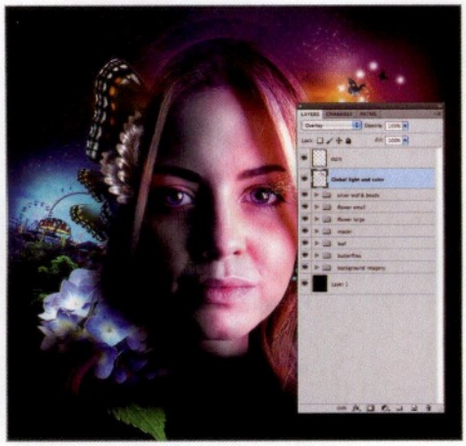
15 Make a new folder in your Layers palette called Butterflies. Now open the supplied image of a butterfly and duplicate it several times. Disperse them around your model however you like, then use Cmd/Ctrl+T to scale and rotate them to your desired location and size.

Drop in the background

16 Open the 'carnival.jpg' as a background for your image. Drop it behind the model and hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate and scale. Add a layer mask and change the Feather value to soften the edges so the image blends in.

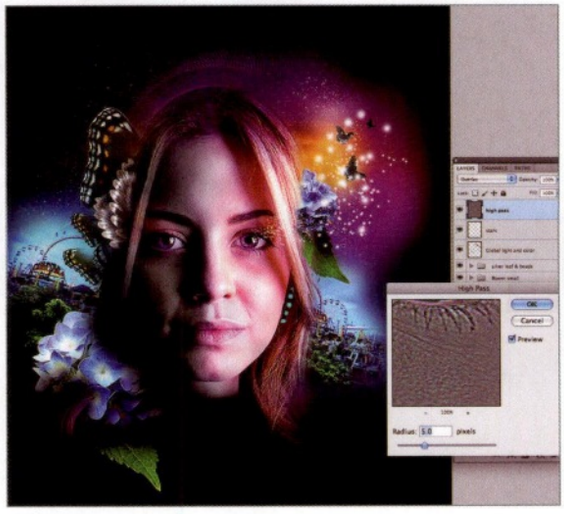
Accent images

17 Open the supplied image of the leaf and beads, drop them in and arrange around her head. For both, press Cmd/Ctrl+L to bring up Levels and adjust the lighting to match the rest of the image.



Vivid light and colouring

18 We return to the technique in step 8 with a new layer set to Overlay, only this time we are painting over the whole montage to make the colours pop. With your brush active and at 25% Opacity, hold down Opt/Alt to sample a light tone from the area you want to enhance, and then paint it on.



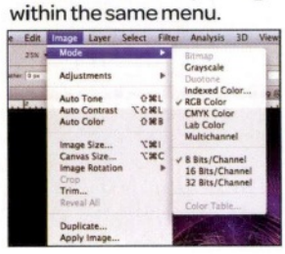
High Pass sharpen

19 Hold down Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to compress the image to a single layer at the top of the stack. Set that layer to Overlay and then go to Filter>Other>High Pass, setting the Radius to approximately 5px to sharpen the whole image.

Expert tip

Work in RGB mode

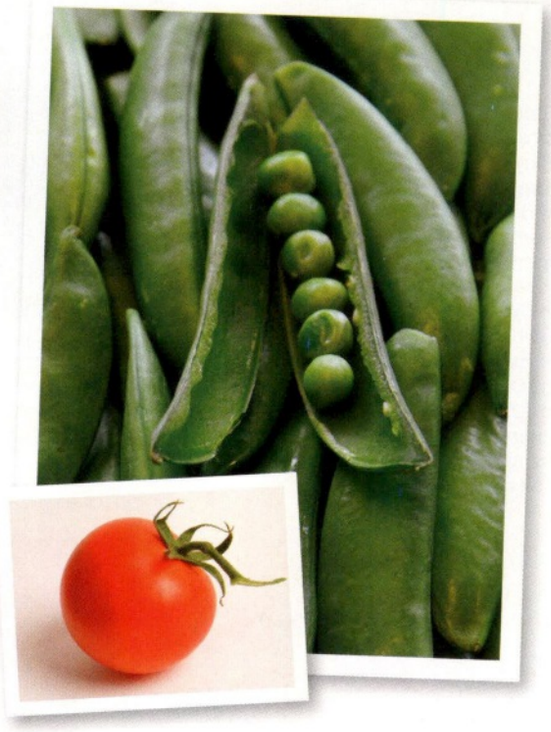
We work with the document in RGB because other modes such as CMYK will disable many of the filters and effects you might want to use. Make sure your file is set to the RGB mode by choosing Image>Mode>RGB, and when you have finished you can flatten and convert the file to CMYK for printing within the same menu.



Combine layer masks

Make use of some of Photoshop's key tools to master the art of surreal effects

Start images



Finding a group of tomatoes inside a pea pod is hopefully something you'll never come across, but that's where Photoshop comes in. Creating the weird and wonderful is easy using the clever masking features such as Refine Edge. Masks enable us to work non-destructively over an image, which means we can go back and tweak layers at any stage in the process. The tomatoes have been converted into a Smart Object, so that any filter applied can also be re-edited at any point.

This tutorial also puts Photoshop's selections and layer styles to the test. We have called upon two layer styles to blend these images, using a drop shadow and an inner shadow to adapt the lighting. Layer styles help to make them seem like they're actually part of the image. The Dodge and Burn tools were also applied to vary the shading on each tomato and make them look like each is unique. Grab the start files from the resource disc and begin this wacky composition for yourself.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Learn to use Smart filters, apply selections and adjust lighting for a convincing blend

Time taken

1 hour

Remove existing peas

01 Grab the image of the peas in the pod from the resource disc. We need to remove the peas before placing in the tomatoes, so duplicate the Background layer using the Duplicate Layer option in the Layer menu. Two separate ones will now be visible in the Layers palette.

Quick selection

02 Pick out the Quick Selection tool from the Toolbar. Click and drag a selection over the inside of the empty half of the pea pod. If the selection area overflows onto the other side, hold Alt/Opt and click over those areas.

Expert tip

Dodge and Burn tools

These two tools are perfect for adapting lighting. Use them when you've completed the composition by double-clicking on the layer's thumbnail. This will open the Smart Object in a separate document. Use the Dodge tool, set to Midtones, to brighten the highlights on some of the tomatoes. Set the Burn tool's Exposure to 50% to darken the bright outline on the tomatoes. By doing so, each tomato can look slightly different.

Copy and paste

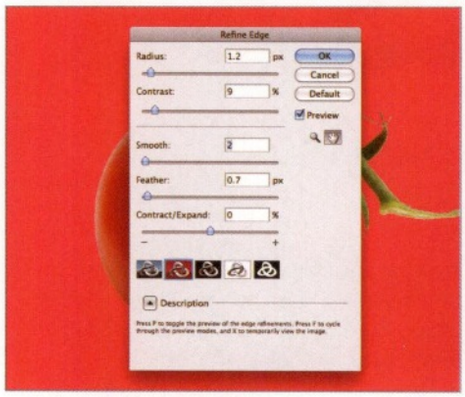
03 Press Ctrl/Cmd+C then Ctrl/Cmd+V to copy and paste the selected area onto its own layer. Go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal. Move this over the peas to cover them up. Enlarge it using the corner points of the Transform box, holding down Shift.

Erase edges

04 Select the Eraser tool and set it to 150px with 0% Hardness. Erase the edges of the copied section to blend it in. The Clone Stamp tool, set to All Layers in the Options bar, will need to be used to retouch the small bits of pea out of the image.

Select background

05 Open up the image of the tomato from the cover disc and select the Magic Wand tool. In the Options bar, set Tolerance to 15 and click once on the white background to select it. For parts around the tomato not selected, hold Shift and click on these. Hold Shift again and click on the white areas between the stalk.



Refine the edge

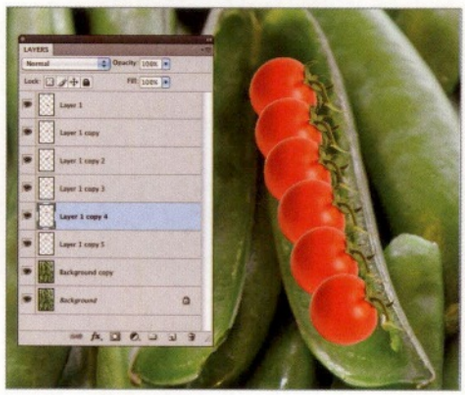
06 Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I to flip the selection and select the tomato. Go to the Select menu and down to Refine Edge. Increase Smooth to 2px and Feather to 1.2, and then try the different masking previews to see how the changes affect the selection. Look to get a clean and smooth edge.

Copy across

07 When happy with the selection, press Ctrl/Cmd+C to copy the tomato. Go back to the image of the pea pod and press Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste the tomato into the image. Go to the Edit menu and down to Free Transform. Hold Shift while dragging a corner of the box to resize the tomato.

Duplicate tomato

08 Once the tomato is set in place, select the Move tool and, while holding Alt/Opt, drag the tomato to a new position in the pod. This creates a duplicate of that tomato as you drag it and places it onto a new layer. Repeat this until there are six tomatoes lying in the pea pod.



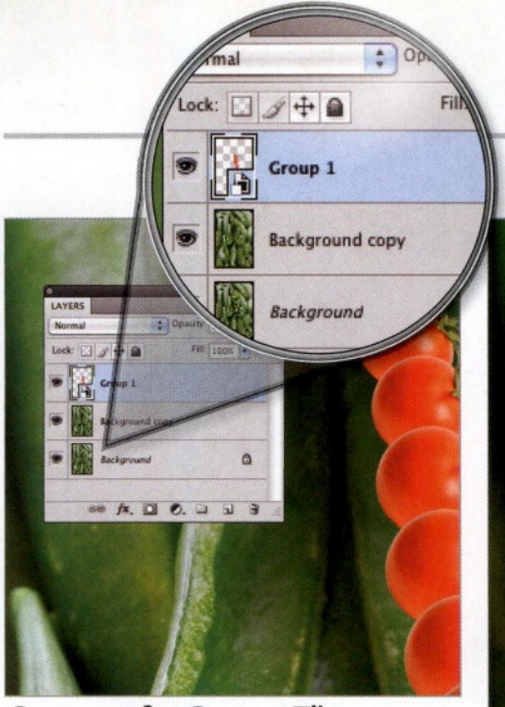
Move layers

09 Notice how each tomato is on a separate layer. Reorder the layers by dragging them from bottom to top, so that the foremost tomato is at the top.

Emphasise perspective

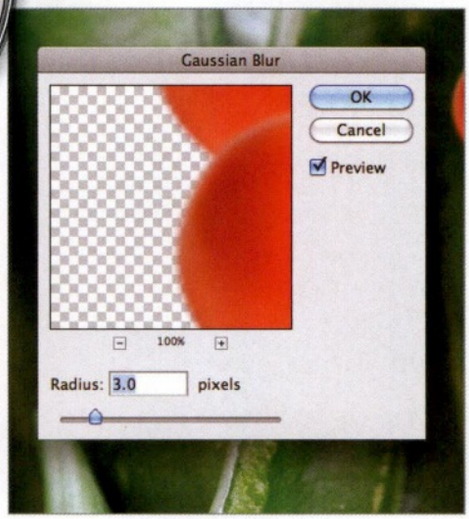
10 Select the Move tool and make sure that Auto-Select: Layer is ticked in the Options bar. Now whenever we click on a tomato, the layer is highlighted. Use Free Transform in the Edit menu to resize each one, making the furthest one the smallest to add perspective.

Combine layer masks



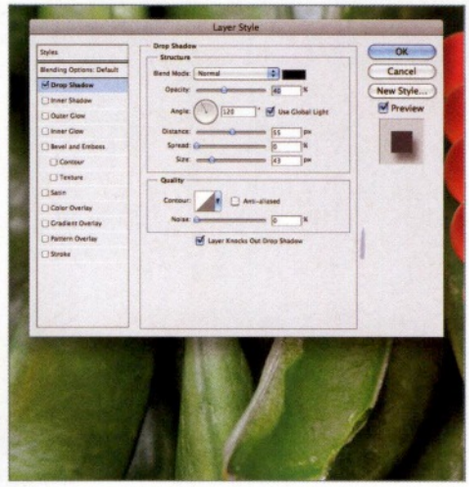
Convert for Smart Filters

11 Click on the Create a New Group button in the Layers palette and drag each tomato layer into this. Go to Filter>Convert for Smart Filters and hit OK in the pop-up window. This enables us to apply a filter to all the layers non-destructively as the tomatoes are now Smart Objects.



Add a Gaussian blur

12 Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set Radius to 3px. The filter has a mask in the Layers palette. Use the Brush tool set to black to paint over the foremost tomatoes. Look to imitate the depth of field blur in the original photo with the tomatoes.



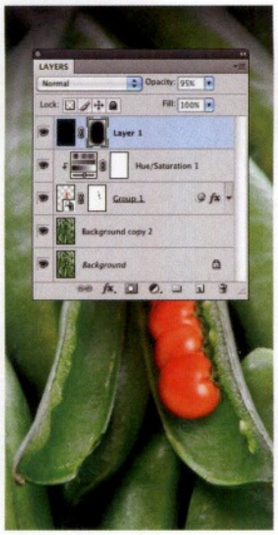
Drop shadow

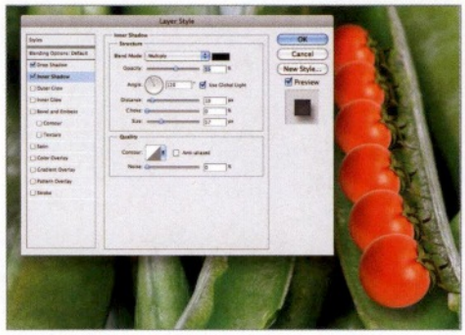
13 To make the tomatoes seem like they're actually inside the pod, double-click on the layer to open up the Layer Style menu. Add a Drop Shadow style and set Opacity to 40%, Angle to 120, Distance to 55px, Spread to 0% and Size to 43px. This adds a soft shadow under them.

Expert tip

How to add a vignette

Add a vignette to the final composition by creating a new blank layer and filling it with black (press D and then Alt/Opt+Backspace). Apply a layer mask to this and use a large, soft brush to paint away the centre of the image to reveal the tomatoes in the pea pod. A vignette is a great way to focus the eye on the main subject, where the background is not as important in the final image.



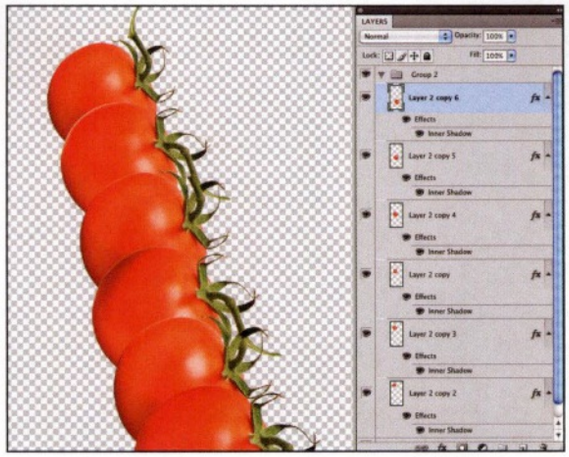


Inner shadow

14 Add the Inner Shadow style and set Opacity to 55%, Angle to 120, Distance to 10px and Size to 57px. Hit OK to apply the new lighting to the tomatoes. Look to match the original lighting already in the image to better merge the two objects together.

Copy across

15 To remove the bits of stalk over the top of the pea pod, add a new layer mask to the tomatoes. Use the Brush tool set to a soft tip to remove the bits of stalk. Zoom in for more accuracy and make it seem as though they're merging with the pea pod.



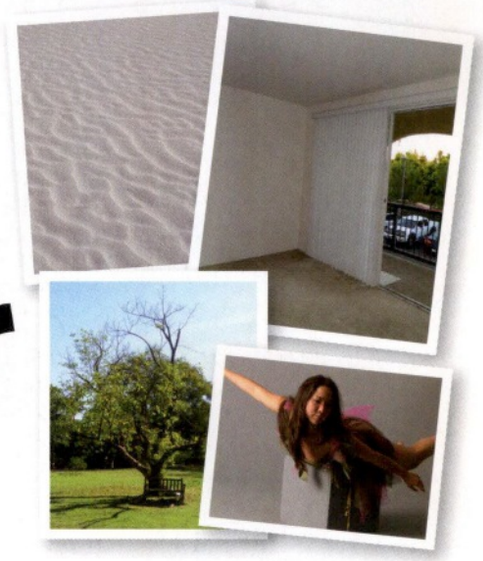
Edit the smart way

Make each tomato look slightly different

After converting the tomatoes to a Smart Object, we may still need to edit them to vary their appearance. We can do this by double-clicking on the thumbnail of the layer. The tomatoes open in a separate document in Photoshop, which contains each layer. Inside here, add an Inner Shadow layer style to each tomato, setting the Mode to Color Burn and Opacity to 30%. We can also flip some of the tomatoes by going to Edit>Transform> Flip Vertical to mix up their directions and rotating them slightly. Be sure to press Ctrl/Cmd+S to save any changes before closing. This will update the tomatoes in the main image.

Photomanipulation

Before images



Create an underwater room

Get to know your filters and blend modes to submerge your own living room in water

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Create a water and light-ray effect with layer masks, the Dodge and Burn tools, and some colour adjustments

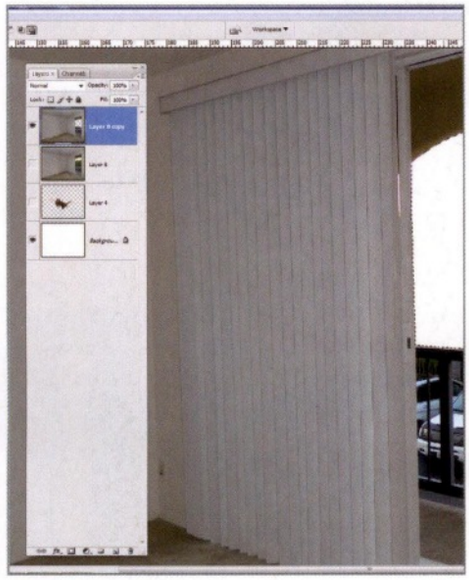
Time taken

1.5 hours

In this tutorial you will learn how to transform any image into a sub-aquatic scene. Using some colour adjustments and a range of filters, you will be able to easily put everything under the water.

You'll also get arty with a water effect, which can come in handy in any project. We'll work with filters such as Blur and Plastic Wrap to create realistic effects, and you will learn the easiest method to create lighting with the Render filter. If you can't see Lighting Effects under Filter>Render, check Photoshop is working in 32-bit mode.

Meanwhile, the Dodge and Burn tools are at play, but be careful not to go too far with these features. You can use the files on the disc to have a go at this yourself, and add in your own elements at the end to go that extra mile.

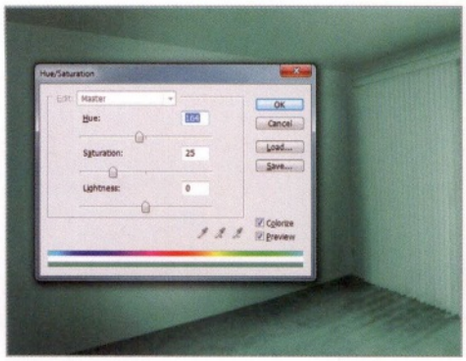


Set the scene

01 First you need to edit your photo of a room. In this example we need red to get rid of the cars you can see through the doorway. Zoom in and use the Pen tool to draw a path around the bits you want to remove, holding the Alt/Opt key. After you've finished, Ctrl/right-click on the path, choose Make Selection and delete the images.

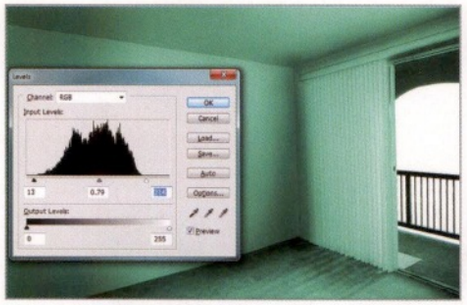
Add some shadows

02 Duplicate the room's layer and, using the Burn tool, change Range to Highlights and lower the Exposure to 20%. Using a Soft Round brush, start carefully painting the wall corners to create some shadows. Increase and decrease the brush size to be more precise by pressing [and] on your keyboard.



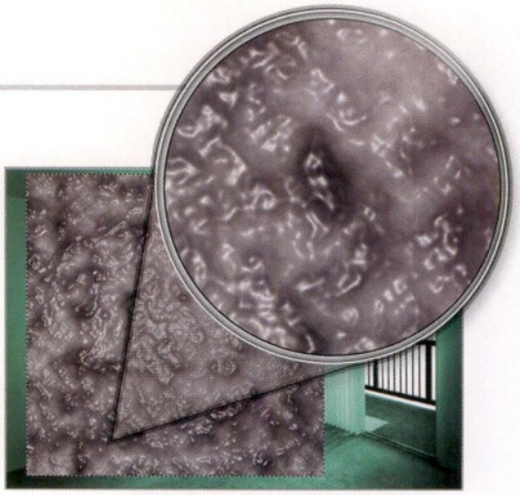
Colourise

03 Let's change the colour to add a swimming pool tone. Hold Ctrl/Cmd+U, open the Hue/Saturation window, tick the Colorize box and change Hue to 180. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, change the Value to 3px and apply the effect.



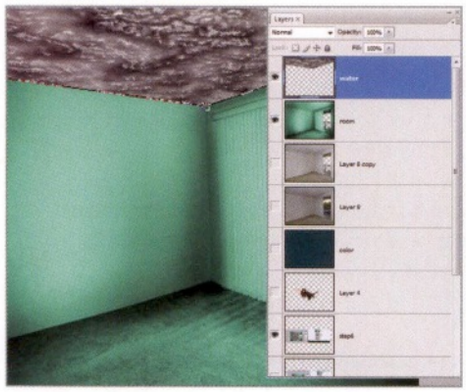
Adjust the levels

04 Press Ctrl/Cmd+L to open the Levels dialog and increase the brightness just a little. Darken the image using the Input Levels before one final adjustment via Image>Adjustments> Channel Mixer. Using the output Channel Red, decrease the Blue to around -20 and the Constant to -10, then click OK.



Create the water effect

05 Open a new layer and, using the Rectangular Marquee tool, select a big square and fill with white. Go to Filter>Render>Difference Clouds and apply the effect. Open the filter again and go to Artistic>Plastic Wrap, increase the values and apply the effect.

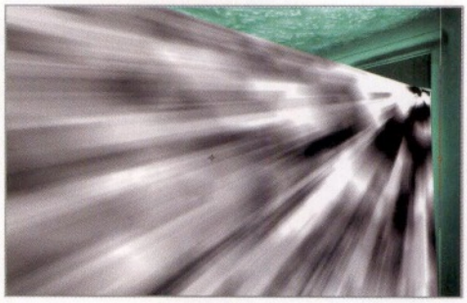


Adjust the water layer

06 Use the Free Transform tool to grab the corners and adjust the water image you've just created. Try to follow the room's perspective to give a more realistic feeling to the image, changing the blend mode to Overlay.

Create a mask

07 Now to soften the edges using a mask. Ctrl/Cmd-click on the water layer thumbnail to select it and then, at the bottom of the Layers palette, click on the Add Layer Mask icon. Click on the mask thumbnail and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and increase the value to 20px to soften the edges.



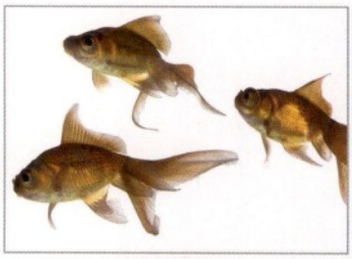
Realistic light rays

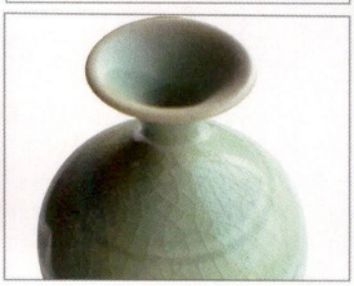
08 Create a new layer and, with the Rectangular Marquee tool, create a rectangle and fill it with white. Click Filter>Difference Clouds then go to Image>Adjustments>Threshold and click OK. Now go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur, change the blur method to Zoom, slide the Blur Center to the top right and click OK, changing the blend mode to Soft Light.

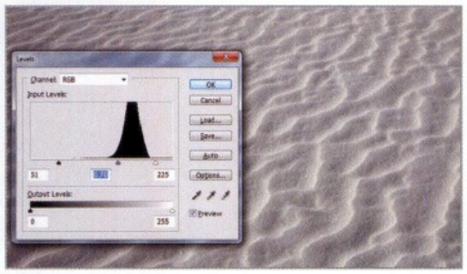
Add other elements

Enhance with detail

You can add other elements to make your work more fun or personalise it by using the things you own, from furniture to animals! We've gone for fish and even added a sofa floating around. You might want to add a shark to the scene; just apply the same methods you have learned to each image.







Water reflection

09 Open the image 'desert.jpg' (stock photo by Marcus J Ranum) and flip it Horizontally. Hit Ctrl/Cmd+ L to open the Curves dialog and adjust to 51, 0.70, 225. Using the Free Transform tool, adjust the edges. Again try to follow the floor perspective to move the layer correctly and change the blend mode to Multiply.

The swimmer

10 Open 'woman.jpg' (stock photo by Marcus J Ranum) in Photoshop. Now use the Magic Wand tool, change the Tolerance to 20 and tick Contiguous. Hold the Shift key and start deleting the grey background. When you are done, invert it using Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+I, cut out the woman and copy and paste on the background using Transform (Ctrl/Cmd+T) to scale her.

Paint extra hair

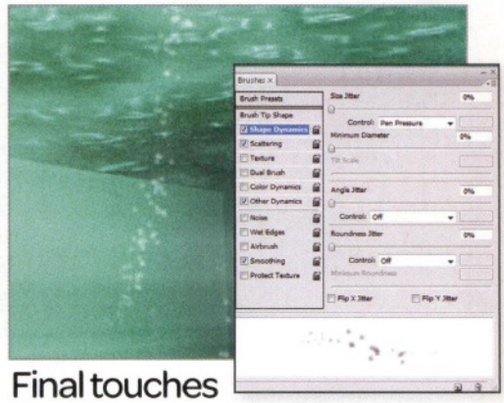
11 On a new layer open the Brush palette and select a small soft brush. Holding Alt/Opt, get some colour samples from the hair and paint some extra strands in as if floating in water. Merge the extra hair and woman layers, open a Hue/Saturation dialog and lower Saturation to -45. Apply a Gaussian blur with a Radius of 1.0px.

Blur the edges

12 Hold Ctrl/Cmd and click on the woman thumbnail to select the layer then add a layer mask. Now select the mask thumbnail and repeat the actions from step 8. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and try a Radius of 10px to get a nice soft edge around the woman then click OK.

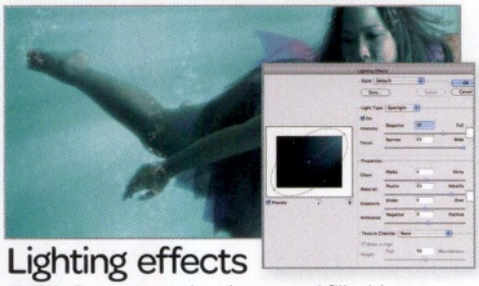
Change colour

13 Select the woman's layer and open the Color Balance adjustment, click on Preserve and change the Color Levels to -24, 0 and -2. Create another layer above and fill the selection with #29a5aa, changing to Overlay with Opacity at 70%. Merge all the woman's layer by Ctrl/right-clicking and choosing Merge Layers. This will come in handy if you want to move, rescale or transform the woman separately later on.



Final touches

14 You can use a default brush to create small bubbles, just click F5 to open the Brush palette, click and change the values on the Shape Dynamics, Scattering and the Other Dynamics to Pen Pressure. Start drawing the bubbles, varying the brush size and lowering the layer opacity. We thought the swimmer might look better facing the other direction so selected the woman's layer and flipped horizontally.



Lighting effects

15 Create another layer and fill with grey using the Paint Bucket tool. Go to Filter>Render>Lighting Effects, choose Light type: Spotlight, turn the light source to the right and apply. Create another layer and fill with #074e54, changing the blend mode to Soft Light. Those final two effects have added some depth to your image.

What can go wrong

Use Burn and Dodge for subtle effects

Sometimes we need to add shadows to create more dramatic scenes, as in this tutorial where they really enhance the underwater atmosphere. One way to do that is using the Burn and Dodge technique, but when you work with these tools you need to be very careful. Always lower the exposure and try using different ranges depending on the areas you want to affect. One good way is to lower the Exposure under 10% and repeat sweeping movements over the area. This way you avoid literally burning your work and overdoing it.

Add power to your images

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Create a scorching hot effect using adjustment layers, filter combinations and custom brushes

Time taken

1 hour

Make a bold statement by adding the searing power of fire to your designs and artwork

You're bound to get noticed when you play with fire (digitally, of course). It can add major impact to your visuals by igniting the viewer's senses with an imagined heat. There's an almost alluring sense of danger whenever you see fire, whether it's incorporated into a magazine advertisement or a slick screensaver. That magazine suddenly feels a little hot in your hands, and that monitor seems to shine with more urgency. Such is the potency of fire.

So, how do we tap into this heat and add it to our compositions? You might be inclined to just grab some stock photos of campfires and blend them in, which is perfectly fine. In this tutorial, however, you'll learn how to create the effects yourself. We'll combine filters to create a fiery inferno effect and we'll use smoke brushes to create flames. We'll also use a custom brush to create a hot star trail.

After you complete the tutorial, try using some of the techniques that you learn to heat up your own projects!

Elements users: on steps that require you to add Layer masks, carefully use the Eraser tool directly on the layer instead.

Start images

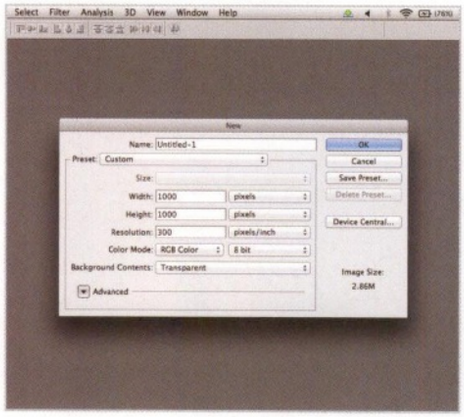
Add power to your images

PHOTOSHOP CS4 AND ABOVE & PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS | **WORKS WITH**

Expert tip

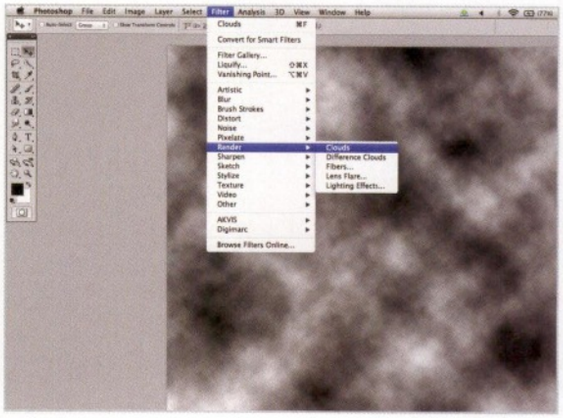
Why black and white?

Have you ever wondered why many filter recipes for textures start off with black and white? For instance, when we create the base fire in this tutorial, we don't start with yellow or orange or red. We go with the default colours because they provide the best contrast and allow our filters to get the best traction when bending and warping pixels. The appropriate colour(s) can be added later via adjustment layers, gradients, etc.



Create the document

01 Create a new document that's at least 1000x1000 pixels and set to 300 pixels per inch. This is a good enough quality to print your finished artwork later.

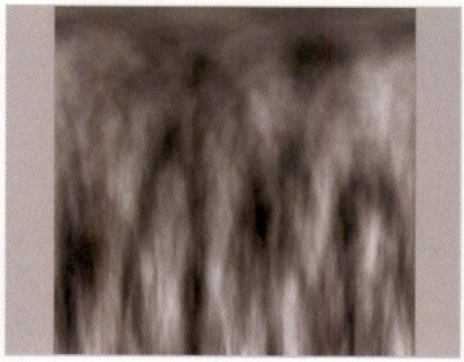


Start a fire

02 To start creating our fire texture, we need something malleable. Let's call upon the Clouds filter. Press D to set your colours to black and white, then go to Filter>Render>Clouds.

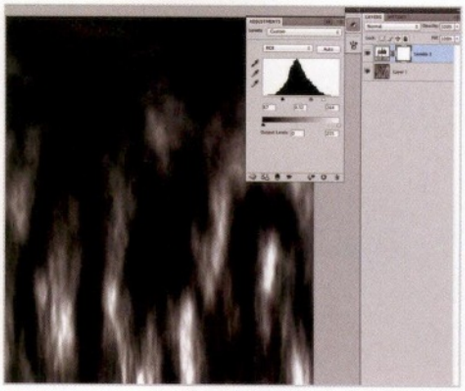
Polar Coordinates

03 Now that we have some texture to play with, let's tweak it further to make it look like fire. Go to Filter>Distort> Polar Coordinates. Tick Polar to Rectangular and then click OK to apply the effect.



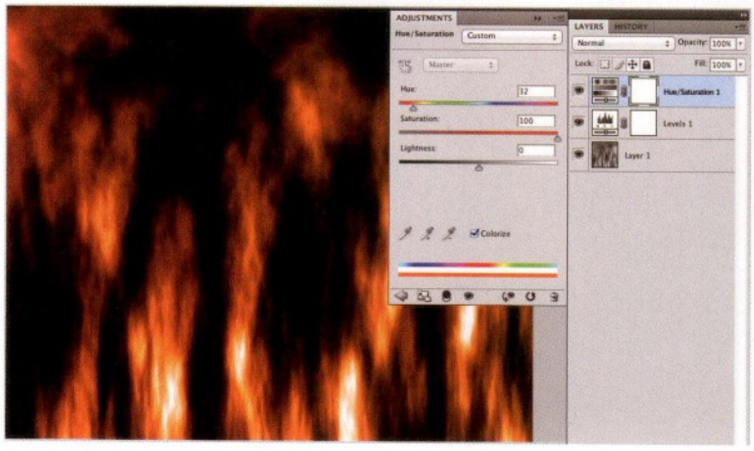
Invert your colours

04 Now invert the colours by going to Image>Adjustments>Invert, or you can simply press Cmd/Ctrl+I instead. This will make the top darker, making the bottom area more flame-like. In just a few steps, we already have the foundation for fire.



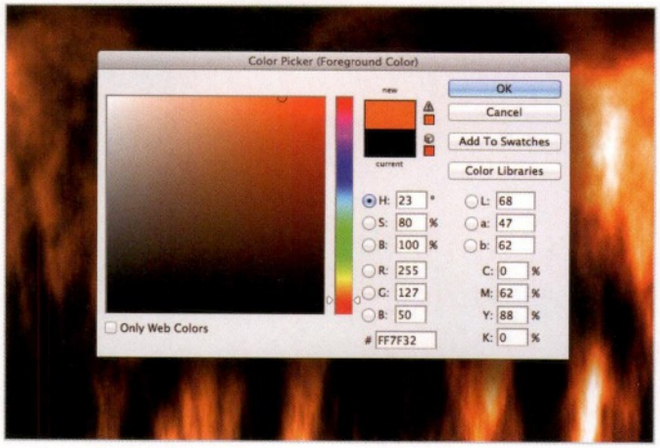
Accentuate the flames

05 To accentuate the flames, we'll boost the contrast with a Levels adjustment. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Click OK. Drag the three sliders so the input levels are 67, 0.52, and 204.



Hue/Saturation

06 Let's now start adding some colour to the fire. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Click OK. Tick Colorize, then set Hue to 32 and Saturation to 100. At the moment, the fire is too monochromatic, so we'll add some more colours next.

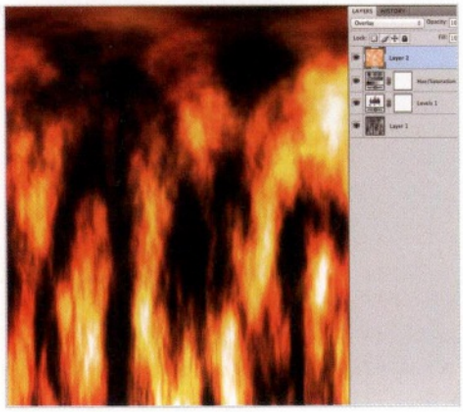


Change colours

07 Create a new layer. Click on the foreground colour and enter the hexadecimal code #FF7F32 into the field at the bottom of the Color Picker dialog box. Click OK. Make sure that the background colour is still white.

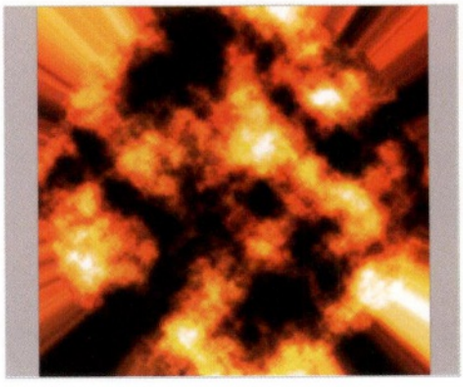
Alternative effect Embellish a 3D typographic composition in CS6

If you have CS6 Extended, you can turn type into a 3D object. From there, you can build up the piece with various textures, shapes, adjustment layers and, of course, your fire. The piece shown here contains some of the same flames and effects that were created in the main tutorial. They were burned into the composition (pun intended) with various blend modes.



Overlay clouds

08 Go to Filter>Render>Clouds. We'll use this randomised mass for extra colouring. Set the blend mode to Overlay. You should now see more believable flames. Save this file as 'Fire.psd' before moving on.

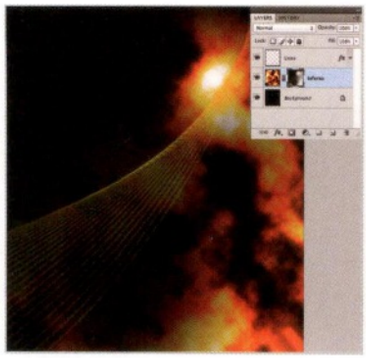


Create an inferno

09 With the same file, we'll create an inferno effect. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E to stamp the visible layers. Go to Filter>Distort>Polar Coordinates and tick Rectangular to Polar. Click OK. Go to File>Save As and save as 'Inferno.psd'.

Add inferno

10 Open 'Start.psd'. This contains a black background and some lines adorned with a few layer styles. Use File> Place to bring 'Inferno.psd' below the Lines layer. Enlarge with Transform tool (T).

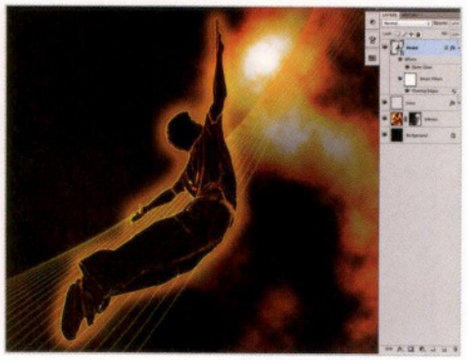


Layer mask

11 Apply a Layer mask to the Inferno layer using the icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Use black and a soft, round brush at 100% Opacity to paint out the top-left area. Soften the transition with a brush at 20% Opacity.

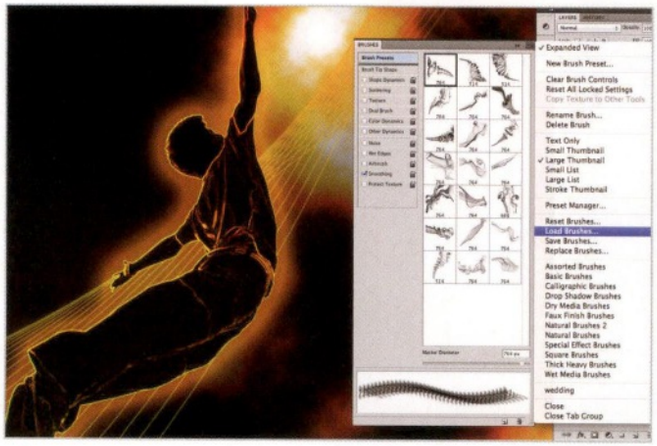
Extraction

12 Now choose a photo; you can download the one we've used from **www.sxc.hu** (Image ID: 993066) and use your favourite tool to extract. You could even strike the pose yourself and have a friend take a photo! For this image, we simply used the Quick Selection tool (W) to select the surrounding colour, then inverted the selection (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I).



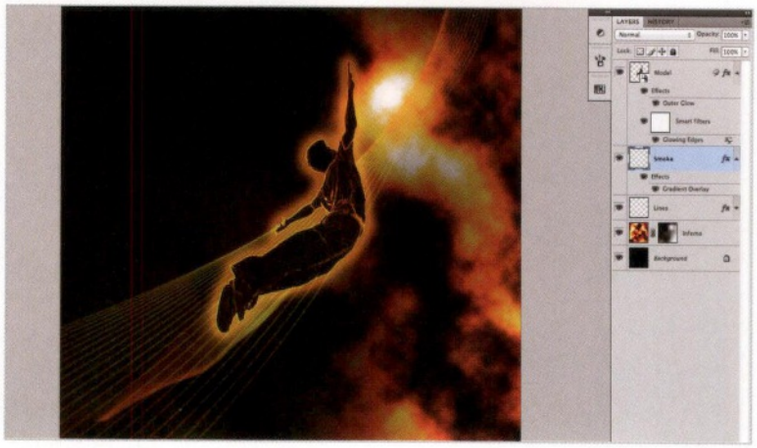
Add person

13 Drag the selected model into the composition. Go to Filter>Stylize> Glowing Edges and play with the settings (here, we use Edge Width 3, Edge Brightness 14 and Smoothness 5). Click OK. Apply an orange Outer Glow layer style (we used 65% Opacity, 19% Spread, and 117px Size).



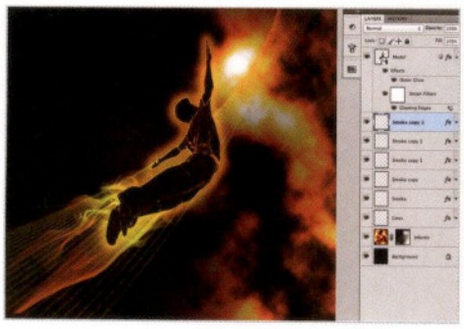
Smoke brushes

14 There are many free smoke brushes on the Web. The one used here is from: **http://qbrushes.net/photoshop-abstract-brushes/smoke-brushes**. Once downloaded, the brush set can be loaded from the Brush palette's flyout menu.



Add smoke

15 Create a new layer below the model. Select a smoke brush preset, set the foreground colour to white and then click to place an instance near the feet. Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) and rotate. Then apply a Gradient Overlay and use the Orange, Yellow, Orange preset.

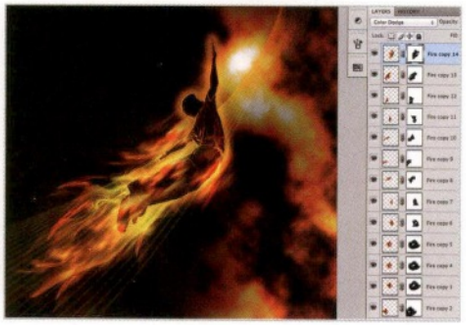


More smoke

16 Go to Edit>Transform>Warp and reshape the smoke, tugging here and twisting there until you're satisfied. Duplicate the layer a few times, warping each to create the base flame shapes. If your Photoshop doesn't have Warp, use the Smudge tool (R).

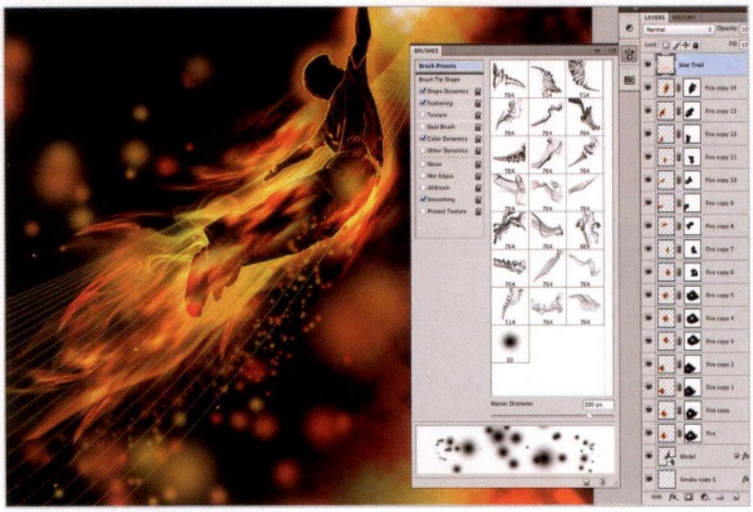
Heating things up

17 Use File>Place to add 'Fire.psd' above the model layer. Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) and rotate to align with the model. Add a layer mask and paint out the edges with a soft, round brush at 100% Opacity. Set the Blend mode to Screen.



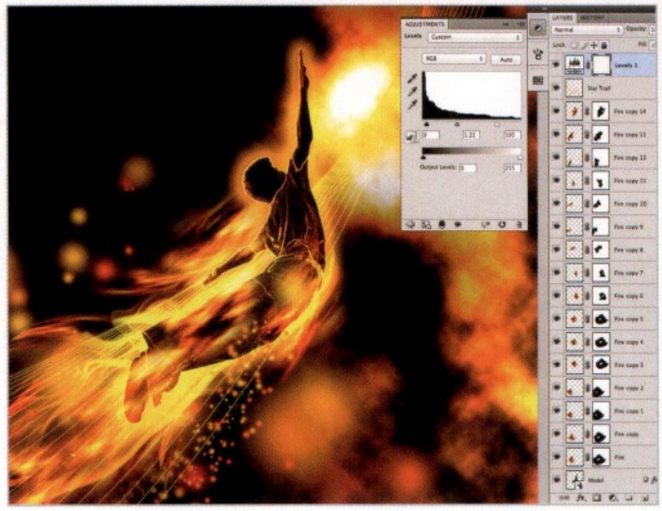
Now we're cooking!

18 Duplicate the layer several times to build up the fire. Warp as needed to reshape and twist the forms. You can also try using the Liquify filter. Set some of the new layers to Colour Dodge instead of Screen to vary the colouring.



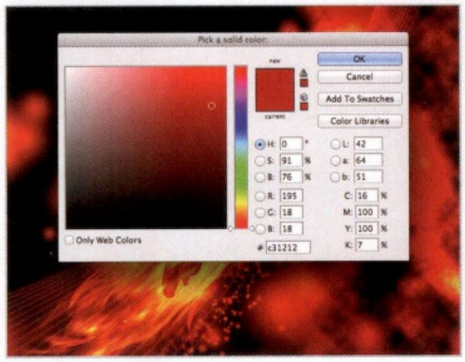
Make a star trail

19 Load 'Stars.abr' from the Brush palette's flyout menu, then select that preset. Set your colours to #E69700 and #9E3600. Use a soft, round brush at 100% Opacity and 60px Size to create a minor trail. Then increase Size to 300px and create the larger stars.



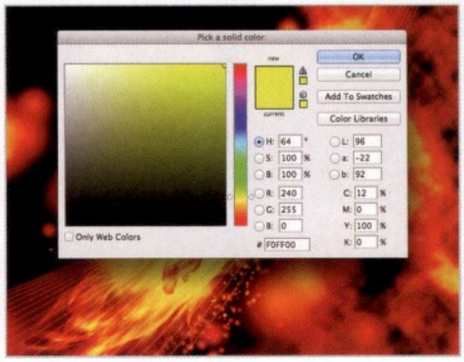
Intensify with levels

20 Let's intensify the fire and improve the overall contrast with Levels. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Click OK. Drag the outer dark and light sliders inward to increase the contrast, then fine-tune with the midtones slider.



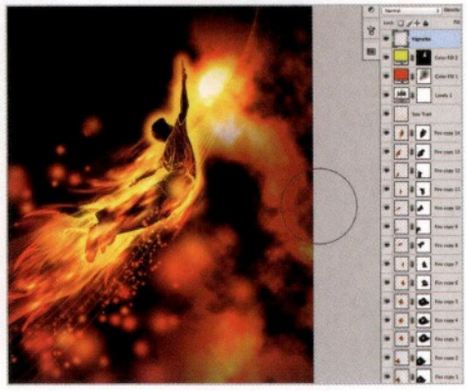
Colour Fill

21 Go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color. Click OK. Enter the hex code #C31212 and click OK. Set the blend mode to Soft Light. On the attached Layer mask, use a soft, round brush at 80% Opacity to paint black on the model, removing the colouring.



Add an aura

22 Create another Color Fill layer, but use #F0FF00. Set the Blend mode to Overlay and drop the Opacity to 50%. On the attached Layer mask, use a soft brush at 80% Opacity to paint black on everything outside the model to give them an aura.



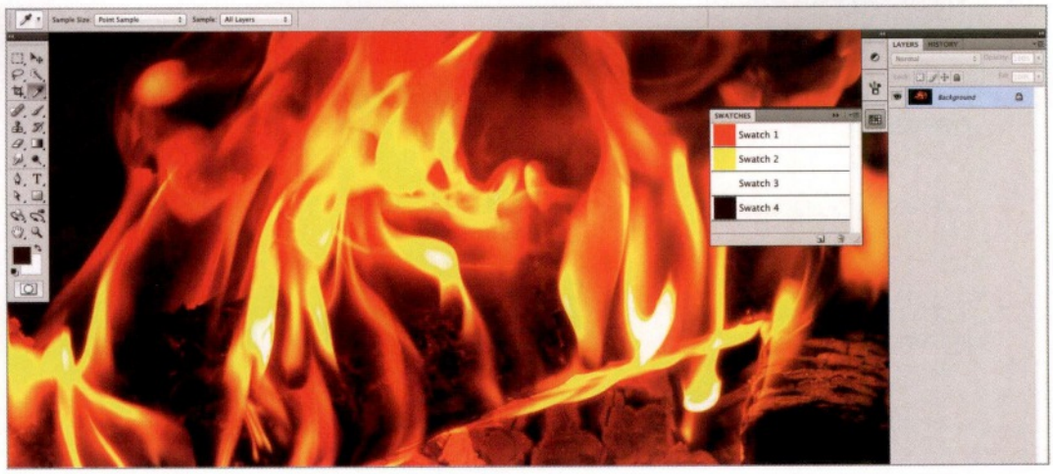
Vignette

23 As a finishing touch, let's create a vignette effect to help draw the viewer's eyes inward. Use a soft, round brush at around 20% Opacity to paint black around the edges of the composition.

Accurate colour

Sharpen the flames

To get accurate colours for the fire effects, we brought some images of fire into Photoshop and then used the Eyedropper tool to capture specific colours, such as the deep red embers of a burning piece of wood. This can help you in future projects, whether it's getting exact colours for another filter effect or finding the right hues for a painting. Save the colours in the Swatches palette so that you don't have to memorise a bunch of hexadecimal colour codes!



Creative projects

206 Retro styles

Turn back time by giving your images an old-school look with our comprehensive guide to retro styles

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Visit the golden age of image making in Photoshop

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Get inspired by the past and create a vintage design

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Use a limited colour palette

224 Create type portraits
Make a portrait image using only words

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Create a 3D jigsaw-puzzle effect

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Design a beautiful, personalised piece of artwork

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Retro photo styles

Take a trip back in time and visit the golden age of image making in Photoshop

Retro photo styles

PHOTOSHOP CS VERSIONS | **WORKS WITH**

It's no secret that vintage imagery has become one of the most popular styles among digital artists. The explosion of portable media with photographic apps such as Instagram has played a huge role in spreading the word and making this more widely available. From a simple change of colour to a more complex effect involving textures and frames, the effects can be captivating to say the least. It's the art of distortion, using techniques to reduce image quality and shifting colour balance for that special, vintage appeal that has hooked so many.

Photoshop gives you all the possibilities for bringing the past into the present in all its old-fashioned glory. We've explored how to re-create some of our favourite vintage styles using various tweaks, adjustments and blend modes. These effects help show the aging processes that were a regular occurrence for traditional paper and ink methods. From grainy black and whites to rusty, texture-rich artwork with interesting borders, there's endless artistic license for making the vintage come alive. If you have a thirst for borders, download some from the internet and try out a collection of homegrown edge effects. Then read on to see how textures can be used for framing artwork.

Alter colours

Create a single hue in an image

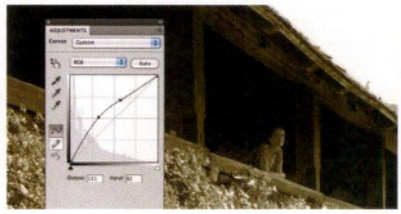
To change the hue of all the subjects in an image, select the Eyedropper tool and click on an existing colour. Look to use the colour that's most prominent and, on a new layer, go to Edit>Fill. Choose Foreground Color and hit OK. In the Layers palette set the blend mode to Hue and you should notice that all other colours apart from the one chosen have changed to this single shade.

Aged paper effect

Tint and texture for authentic style

Tint your shot

01 Go into the Image menu and selecting the Black & White adjustment (Image>Adjustments). Tick the Tint box to colourise the image and slide each colour value to modify the tonal balance.



Fade the image

02 To alter the highlights and shadows through the image, apply a Curves adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer). By lifting the curve from the centre, the image will appear aged and faded.

Apply texture

03 This texture from www.sxc.hu (ID: 1366196) was placed over the top of the image. Using the Magic Wand tool, select the white space around the edge and then press Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I to invert it.

Mask the image

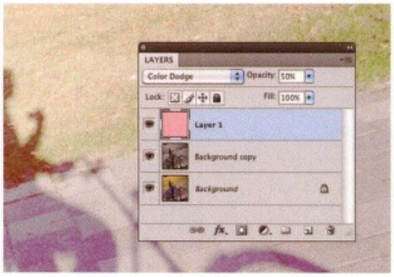
04 Change the blend mode of the texture's layer to Multiply and then double-click on the Background layer to convert it to an editable one. Add a Layer Mask here to hide the surrounding image.

Abstract vintage

Distort colours with a fill layer

Reduce colour

01 Duplicate the Background layer and then desaturate it by pressing Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+U. This removes all colour, but to keep a small amount in the image you can lower its Opacity setting to 30%.



Fill colour

02 On a new layer go to Edit> Fill and choose Color under Contents. Set the hue to a light pink colour (ffb2b9) and hit OK. Change the layer's blend mode to Color Dodge and then reduce the Opacity to 50%.

Darken corners

03 Add a blank layer to the top of the layer stack and use a black soft brush to dab on shadows over the corners. This doesn't need to be perfect and you can even not apply shading to one of the corners.

Crop squarely

04 To adapt your image to a perfect square, use the Crop tool and hold Shift while dragging the bounding box. Place the main subject slightly off-centre while keeping the dark corners visible.

"The square image format is popular among photo apps"

Mix up aspect ratios

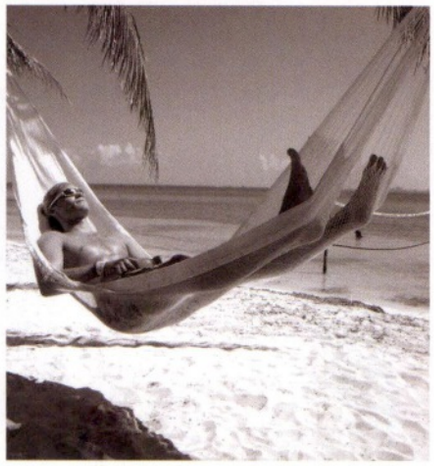
Play with the size of your canvas for cool effects

The square image format used in this shot is popular among Hipstamatic cameras and mobile photo apps. Some digital cameras have the option to change the image's aspect ratio to 4:3, 16:9 or 3:2. To try out these different formats in Photoshop, the Crop tool has Height and Width options. By typing 4 inches into the Width field and 3 inches into the Height field in the Options bar, you can apply these sizes for a vintage style.

Texture images

Overlay a grainy shot to create a tactile illusion

Quick monochrome effects



Get specific black and white looks with the Channel Mixer

Vintage black and white images weren't always captured with a perfect exposure, and the mistake actually produced interesting results. This is a very fast way to not only convert an image to monochrome but also increase contrast in one hit. Open up the Channel Mixer adjustment layer and tick the Monochrome box. The image turns into a single Gray channel, but by boosting the Red slider in a landscape image, for example, the highlights become brighter. Adjusting the other channels will produce variations.

DISCOLOUR THE IMAGE

To control the tonal variations of each colour, use the Channel Mixer adjustment layer. Choose a colour to tweak from the list in the adjustment and then adapt the sliders to discolour the image

CONTROL SATURATION

The Hue/Saturation adjustment layer contains a mask that can be used to create selective black and whites. This was used in this effect by reducing the Saturation slider to -75. We then painted over the car to bring back some blue

TEXTURISE

The texture used here was downloaded from www.sxc.hu (image ID: 1369906). Once opened into Photoshop, Ctrl/Cmd+A to select canvas and then copy and paste it onto the photo. By changing its blend mode to Color Burn the texture blends seamlessly into the image

BRIGHTNESS

To brighten the image to imitate overexposure, add a Levels adjustment layer. Slide the far-right and middle sliders inwards to increase the contrast and brightness. This will depend on how bright your image is to begin with

Film effect

Design a film-frame border

DEPTH OF FIELD
Duplicate the Background layer and use the Gaussian Blur filter with a Radius of 7px to create depth of field. Add a layer mask and, with the Brush tool, reveal the people and objects in the foreground that are in focus

ADD TEXT
The small arrow on the side was made using the Custom Shape tool. The arrow is a preset shape that can be applied as small or as large as you need. The font used for the text around the edges of the frame was Helvetica Neue and we lowered the Opacity of the numbers on the top edge

FILM FRAME
The edge of this frame was created using the Square Brushes from the Brushes palette (Window>Brushes). Click once in a corner of the image and then hold Shift and click in another corner to create a straight edge. Cutting the corners off completes the frame

TINT WITH BLUE
The blue tint was created using a Gradient Map adjustment layer. The two shades of blue used are 736ff3 and 9cd4ff. Changing the blend mode to Linear Light produces a very high contrast effect

Create custom borders

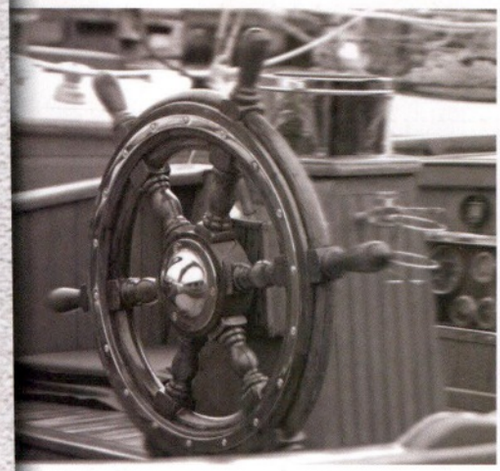
Enhance your image with a frame

One of the distinguishing features of a vintage image can be its border. They are made using multiple tools, such as the Brush tool to paint an edge across all four sides. Using one of the Dry Media Brushes from the options inside the Brushes palette, a rough edge can be drawn around an image. There are several frames and borders that you can download from the internet and use over any image to help create a vintage aesthetic.

Selective blurring

Create a focal point with blur

Focal softening is a characteristic of old photographs, and is almost blurring of some parts of the image. To do this, make a duplicate of the black and white layer. Now use the Motion Blur filter under Filter>Blur and apply a Distance of 20px and an Angle of 0. This amount will vary from image to image depending on how much blurring you need. Add a layer mask to this layer and you can paint away the subject you want to keep in focus using the Brush tool.



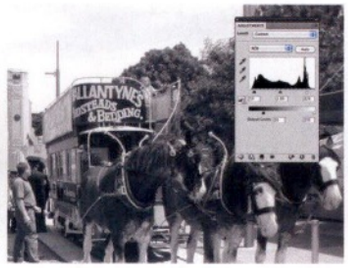
"Focal softening is a characteristic of old photographs"

Stylish black and white

Blur subjects and apply a patchwork border

Duplicate and blur

01 Duplicate the Background layer by dragging it onto the Create a New Layer icon at the base of the Layers palette and desaturate using Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+U. For the selective blurring you can use a layer mask to choose a subject or area of the image.

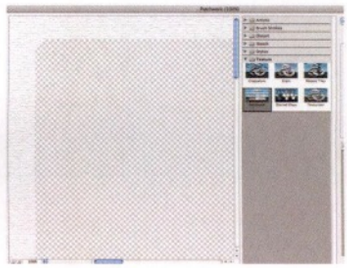


Higher contrast

02 The Levels adjustment layer enables you to change the balance of the highlights and shadows in an image. Start by moving the highlights and shadows to points inwards, and then push the black point under Output Levels in until the image fades.

Border

03 Add a border around the image using the Rounded Rectangle tool set to Paths in the Options bar. Now adjust the Radius of the tool to about 45px. Draw a rectangle over your image to form the border, Ctrl/right-click inside its frame and choose Make Selection.



Add patchwork

04 Create a new blank layer and Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I to invert the selection. Go to Edit>Fill and set the Color under Contents to a light grey (c6c6c6). To give this border some texture, use the Patchwork filter under Filter>Texture. Set Square size to 3 and Relief to 15.

Sepia tone

Alter the hues of a shot for a nostalgic feel

LOW CONTRAST
We went for a low contrast image with muted colours. Anything goes for the vintage look and by using a different fill colour with different blend modes, you can achieve endless vintage results

REDUCE OPACITY
After applying a solid colour over the image, we found the initial effect to be over the top and too vivid. Lowering the Opacity to 50% in the Layers palette meant that the effect could be subtle

BLEND IN
An orange fill layer was used to tint the image. Creating a new layer and going to Edit>Fill we set Contents to Color and entered ff8d12 into the number field. We changed the blend mode of this layer to Color Dodge

Best of blend modes

A selection of blending options for a retro style

MULTIPLY
A great option for a subtly darker look.

COLOR
Maintain detail but tweak the hue.

LINEAR DODGE
This mode will lighten and brighten the image.

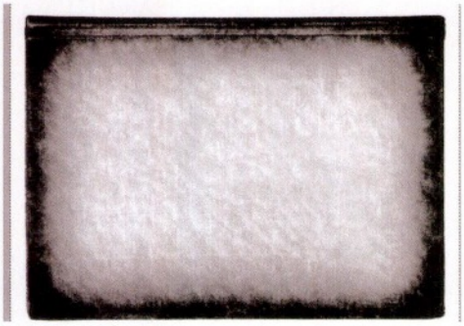
LIGHTER COLOR
Works with the colour channels to lighten.

HARD LIGHT
A dramatic version of the Overlay mode.

DARKEN
Selects and enhances the darkest colours.

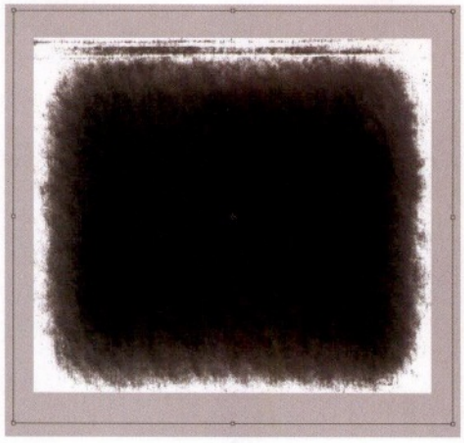
Apply texture

How to use texture for borders



From canvas to canvas

01 When opening a texture in Photoshop, press Ctrl/Cmd+A to select the entire texture then use Edit>Copy to send it to the clipboard. Back on the main image, use Edit>Paste to move it onto the canvas. Move the texture layer so it's just below the Curves adjustment.



Resize texture

02 To resize the texture to fit correctly over an image, go to Edit>Free Transform. This activates a transformation box that can be used to reshape and resize the texture. Hold Shift to maintain the ratio of your object here. For this particular image we pressed Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the black areas of the texture to white.

Soften the effect

03 Change the blend mode of the texture layer to Screen to soften the texture in some areas, particularly the main subject, and add a layer mask. Select the Brush tool with Opacity 50% in the Options bar and a low Hardness tip. Paint black into areas to edit the mask.

Grungy portraits

Alter colour and add texture to portraits

EXTRA CONTRAST
The Curves adjustment layer was applied to the very top of the layer stack. This allowed the texture underneath to be affected by the changes too. By lifting the Curve adjustment layer's line upwards in the top half, the highlights could be whitened

BLEACH LAYER
By duplicating the main Background layer we can apply the Screen blend mode to the duplicate. Screen mode bleaches the highlights in an image and by lowering the layer's Opacity down to 30% we're able to control just how much bleaching is applied

CHANGE THE HUE
The Hue/Saturation adjustment (Layer>New Adjustment Layer) determines the image's mood. For this scene we ticked the Colorize option in the adjustment layer, set Hue to 77 and Saturation to 8. Lowering the Opacity to 80% brought back a touch of colour

CROP SMART
We cropped the image so it's format is a slightly elongated square. This meant that we could get the man on the left and the sign on the right in the frame

Expert tip

Find textures

There are many great resources online for grabbing textures. This texture is free from www.sxc.hu (image ID: 1361000) and was chosen for its round corners and distinct pattern of scratches. However, for a more instant hit of free textures, load up your resource disc and see the range of roughened surfaces.

BLAST
FROM THE
PAST
SS
396
Goodrich
Radial T/A

PHOTOSHOP CS4 AND ABOVE & PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS | **WORKS WITH**

Start images

Create a retro poster

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Blend photos, textures and effects to create a retrolicious composition

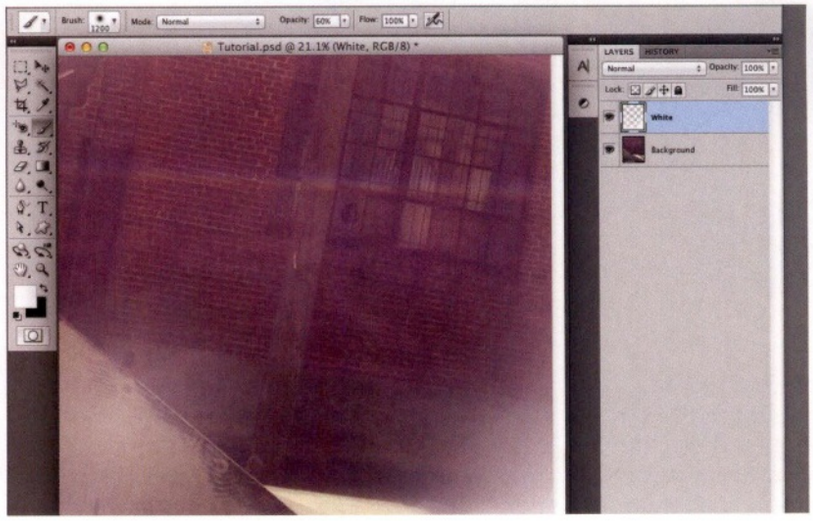
Time taken

1 hour

Seek inspiration from the past and create a vintage design

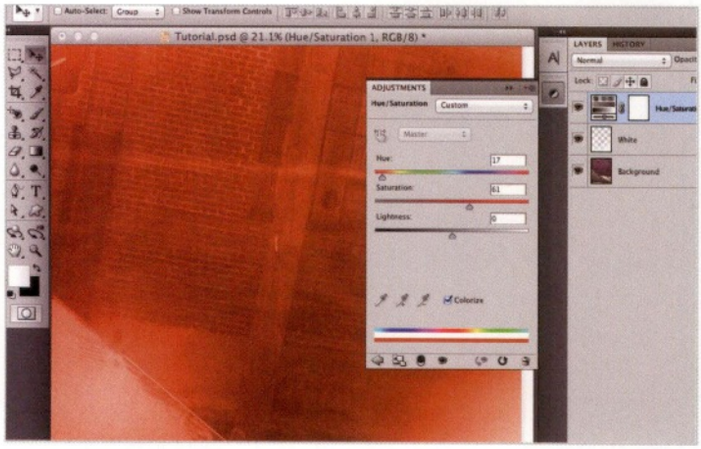
With Photoshop's intuitive tools, it's simple and fun to create a poster from your favourite images that looks like something from the past! We'll use texture and colouring to simulate the look of aged paper and we'll also employ effects such as the Color Halftone filter to intensify the retro mystique. Feel free to use your own photos and favourite fonts for this project, but if you don't already have the right assets, don't worry. We'll utilise three generous sites for appropriate content: **http://fontfabric.com**, **www.sxc.hu** and **www.morguefile.com**.

If you're using Elements, for any of the steps that require layer masks, carefully use the Eraser tool directly on the layer instead. For step 6, make a duplicate layer before editing.



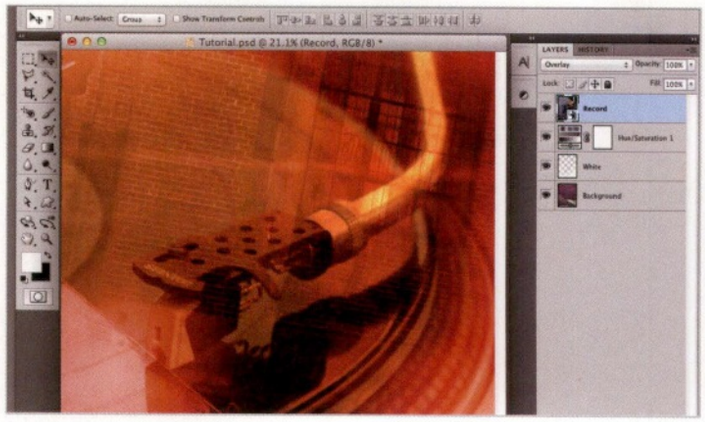
Background

01 Open 'Start.jpg'. This contains an urban image upon which we'll build all of our retro composition. Create a new layer named White. Set your Foreground colour to white and then use a Soft Round brush at 60% Opacity to paint around the bottom and sides to create a slight vignette.



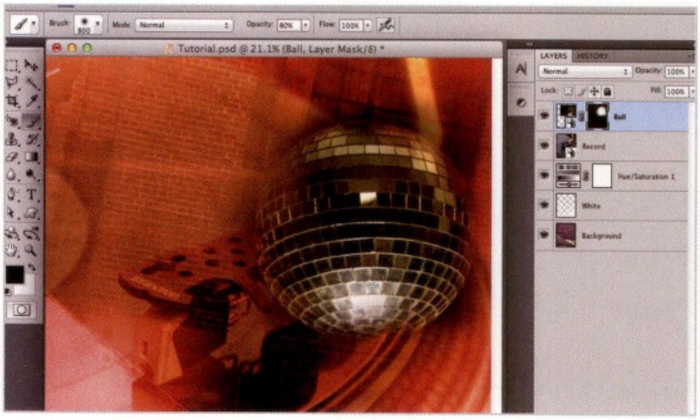
Hue/Saturation

02 Start the aging process by applying a red-orange colour. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation and click OK. Tick Colorize, then set Hue to 17 and Saturation to 61.



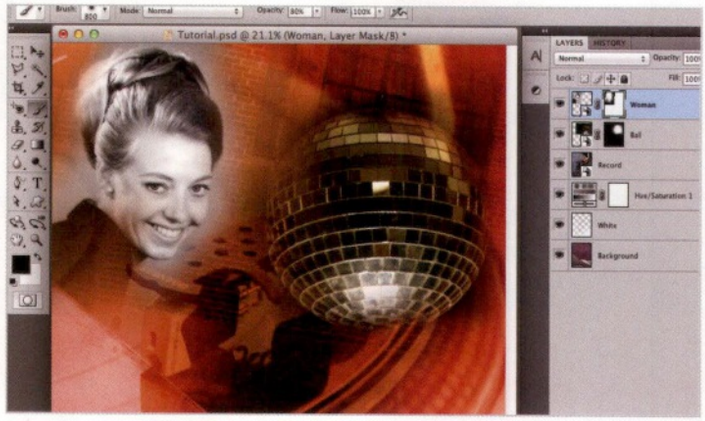
Add record player

03 Use File>Place to add the record player photo from the supplied files (or source your own). We'll be blending this into the background, so enlarge it to fill the whole document. Name the layer Record, then set the blend mode to Overlay.



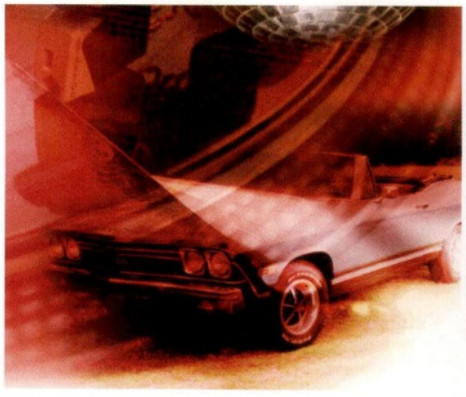
Bring in the disco ball

04 Use File>Place to add the disco ball. Scale it down slightly, then position in the upper right. Name the layer Ball. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All and set the Foreground colour to black. Use a Soft Round brush at 80% Opacity to paint out the black.



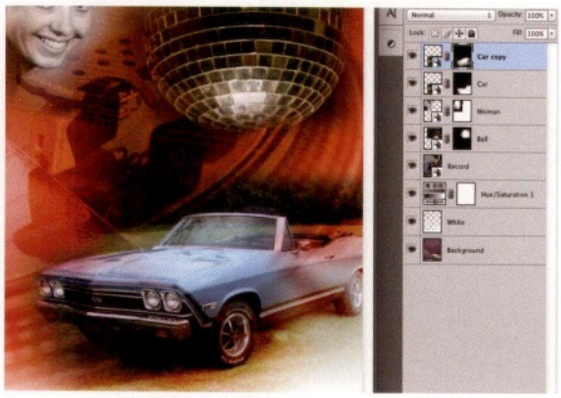
Use a model

05 Place the retro model in your document. Before confirming, Ctrl/right-click and choose Flip Horizontal, then scale down and position her to the left. Name the layer Woman. Apply a layer mask and paint out the edges and surrounding areas to blend her in.



More images

06 Place the old convertible in and situate it at the bottom right. Name this layer Car. Set the blend mode to Color Burn to boost the shadows. Apply a layer mask and paint out the top and left areas.



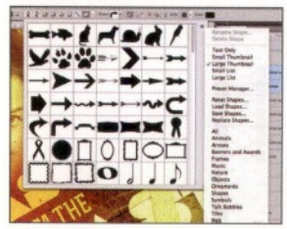
Duplicate the car

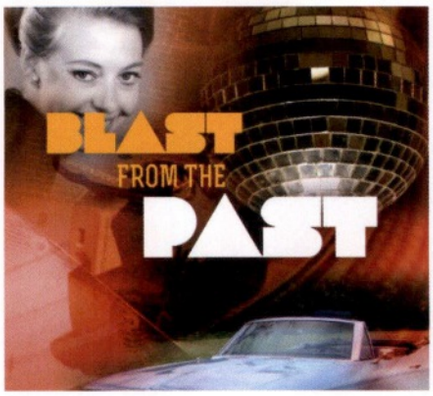
07 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the car and set the blend mode to Normal. Paint black in the mask in the lower areas to reveal the darker colours of the previous layer. Set the Foreground colour to white and paint back some of the upper car.

Expert tip

Custom shapes

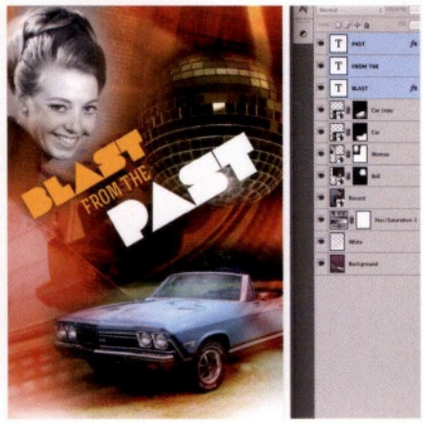
There's a whole world of vector shapes within the Custom Shape tool (U). Click the Shape drop-down to see the options and build your library by searching online for the CSH format.





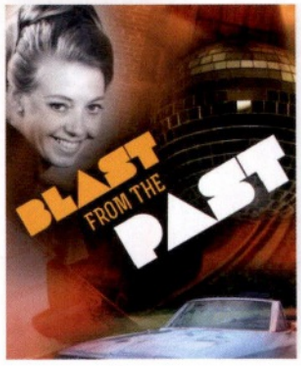
Add text

08 Download and install the Lot font from **http://fontfabric.com/lot-free-font** and add the words BLAST and PAST on separate layers. Apply drop shadows to each, then use Rex Bold from the same site for FROM THE.



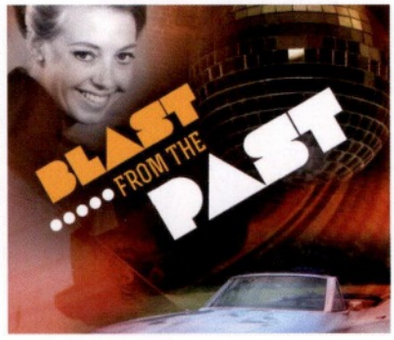
Rotate layers

09 Now let's rotate all the text at once. Select all the text layers and then press Cmd/Ctrl+T. In the Options bar, set the Angle to -30 degrees and press Enter.



Undershadow

10 The text looks good, but it's difficult to discern from the background. Create a layer underneath and name it Undershadow. Set the Foreground colour to black and use a Soft Round brush at 30% Opacity to paint behind the text.

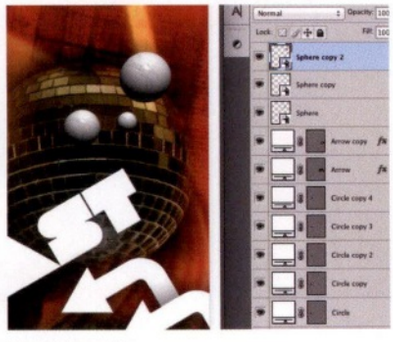


Add circles

11 Use the Ellipse tool (U) set to Shape Layers to create a circle. Select the Move tool (V), then Opt/Alt+Shift-click and drag four times. Select all five circle layers. Click Distribute Horizontal Centers in the Options bar and rotate it -30 degrees.

Arrow detail

12 Select the Custom Shape tool again and use the Shape fly-out menu to load Arrows. Use Arrow 20 to make a shape layer and name it Arrow. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Flip Horizontal. Rotate -30 degrees, add a drop shadow, then duplicate and move it slightly.



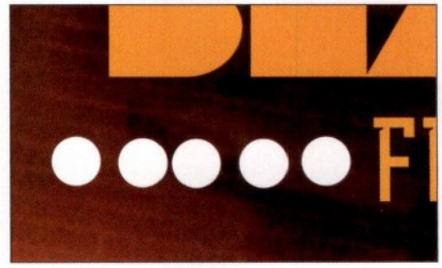
Add spheres

13 Place 'Sphere.png' and put it in the upper right of the image. Duplicate twice and stagger their positions. To vary the sizes, select a sphere and press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Hold Shift then click and drag a corner handle to scale it. Hit Enter.

Expert edit

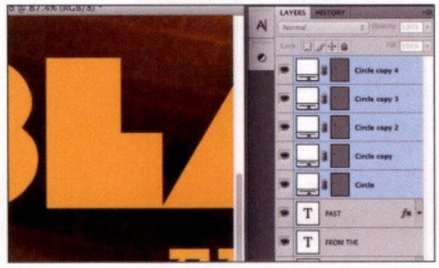
Create a circle

Set your Foreground colour to white and select the Ellipse tool. Make sure Shape Layers is set in the Options bar. Hold Shift, then click and drag to create a circle.



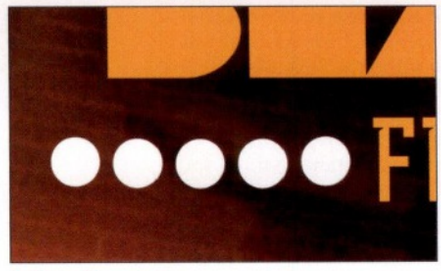
Duplicate circle

Select the Move tool (V). To quickly make a duplicate and keep them lined up, press and hold Opt/Alt and Shift, then click and drag. Repeat three more times.



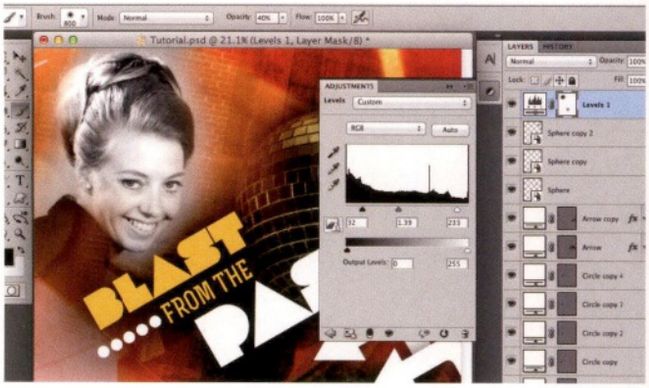
Select layers

To select all five layers, click one end then Shift-click the other (if you needed to select non-contiguous layers, you can Cmd/Ctrl-click each layer).



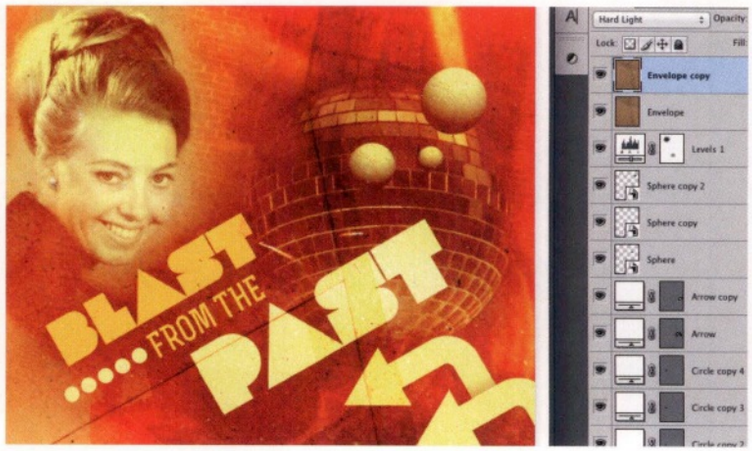
Distribute

With the Move tool still selected, look in the Options bar. You'll see the Align and Distribute options. Click on Distribute Horizontal Centers.



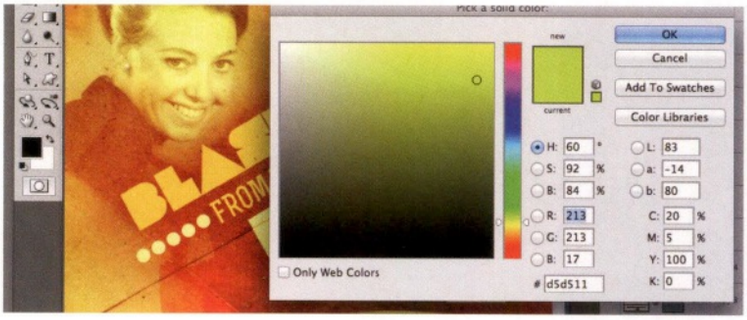
Levels adjustment

14 Make sure the top-most layer is selected, then go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels and click OK. Drag the outer dark and light sliders inwards to improve contrast. Fine-tune it with the Midtones slider. Paint black on the mask to remove any excessive highlights.



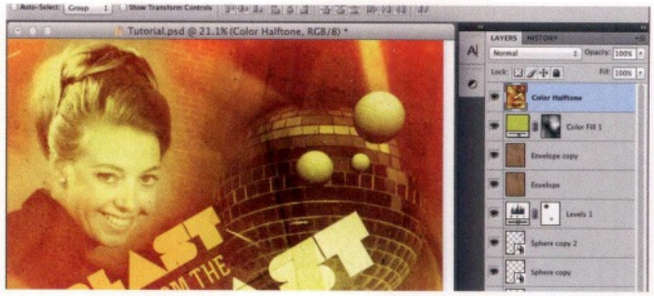
Add envelope texture

15 Now let's add some paper texture to really age the piece. Open 'Envelope.jpg', then set the blend mode to Hard Light. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the envelope, kicking the vintage look into overdrive!



Colour fill

16 Go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color and click OK. Enter the colour #d5d511 at the bottom of the Color Picker and click OK again. Paint out some of the colour with the Eraser (E) so it doesn't overwhelm the whole image and is complementary to the texture.



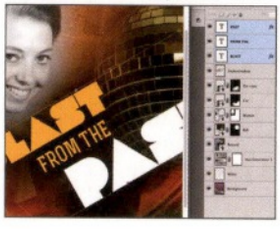
Stamp visible

17 We need to apply a filter to the whole composition, so let's use the Stamp Visible command. Create a new layer, then press the keyboard shortcut Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E. The new layer will be filled with a composite copy of all of the other visible layers. Name this Color Halftone.

Expert tip

Rotating layers

Select one or more layers then go to Edit>Transform>Rotate. You can also use the handy keyboard shortcut for Free Transform, Cmd/Ctrl+T. To rotate, hover outside the box then click and drag. To constrain the rotation at 15-degree increments, hold down Shift. If you want a specific rotation, you can put the value in the Options bar.



Color Halftone filter

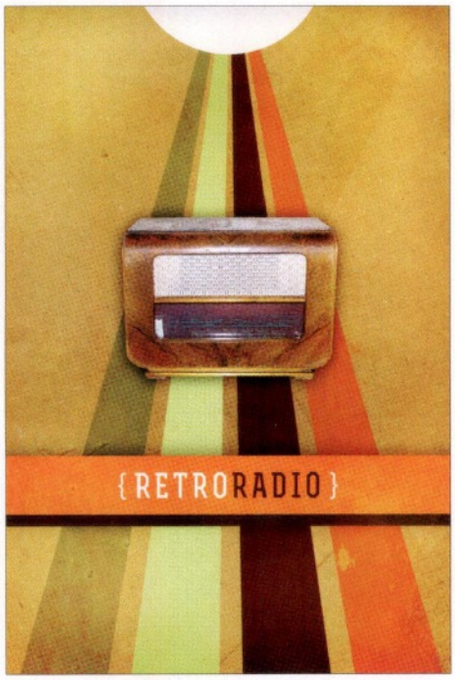
18 Go to Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone. Set the Max. Radius to 17 and then click OK. Set the blend mode to Overlay in the Layers palette and set the Opacity to 40%. Apply a layer mask via the icon at the base of the palette and paint out some of the areas to lessen the effect.

Alternative poster ideas

Hungry for more retro? Get inspired and then create your own pieces!

After completing this tutorial, you will be eager to create more retro designs. As with any genre, there are many design options for the retro style. Fire up your internet and search for examples of both actual retro design and modern-day re-creations. Bookmark your favourite pages to create an inspiration index.

Prepare by learning tricks and techniques to create the effects needed for this style. Use the methods learned in this tutorial as a starting point, then research new ideas and experiment with your own. Here are four further designs to examine, but don't let these limit you! The past is rich with ideas so go wherever your inspiration takes you.

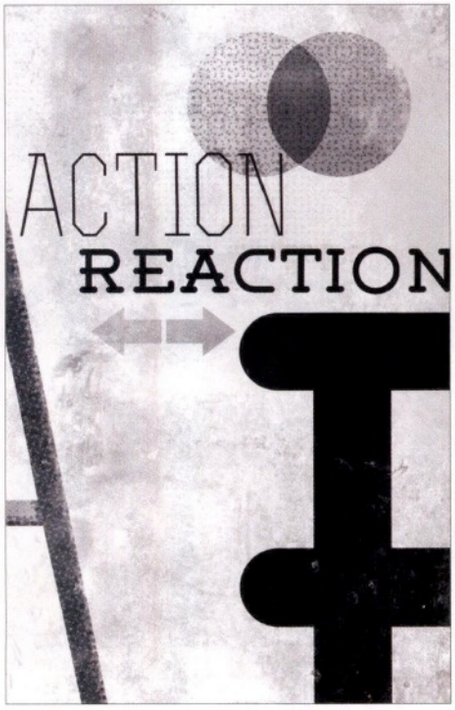


Retro Radio

This design pairs an old-time radio with a multi-coloured array of stripes set against an old paper background. To achieve the perspective effect, apply the Perspective Transform command to four vertical stripes created with the Rectangle tool (U). Add some drop shadows to the radio and the title banner to give them a little boost, and add fabric textures from free stock sites.

Chubbot!

This piece is inspired by old toy ads featuring robots. Chubbot was constructed with some vector shapes and pre-rendered 3D. The starburst can be easily created by using a set of vertical stripes. Merge them into one layer, then apply the Polar Coordinates filter using the Rectangular to Polar option. Add some dirty texture to help offset the visual heaviness of this symmetrical piece.

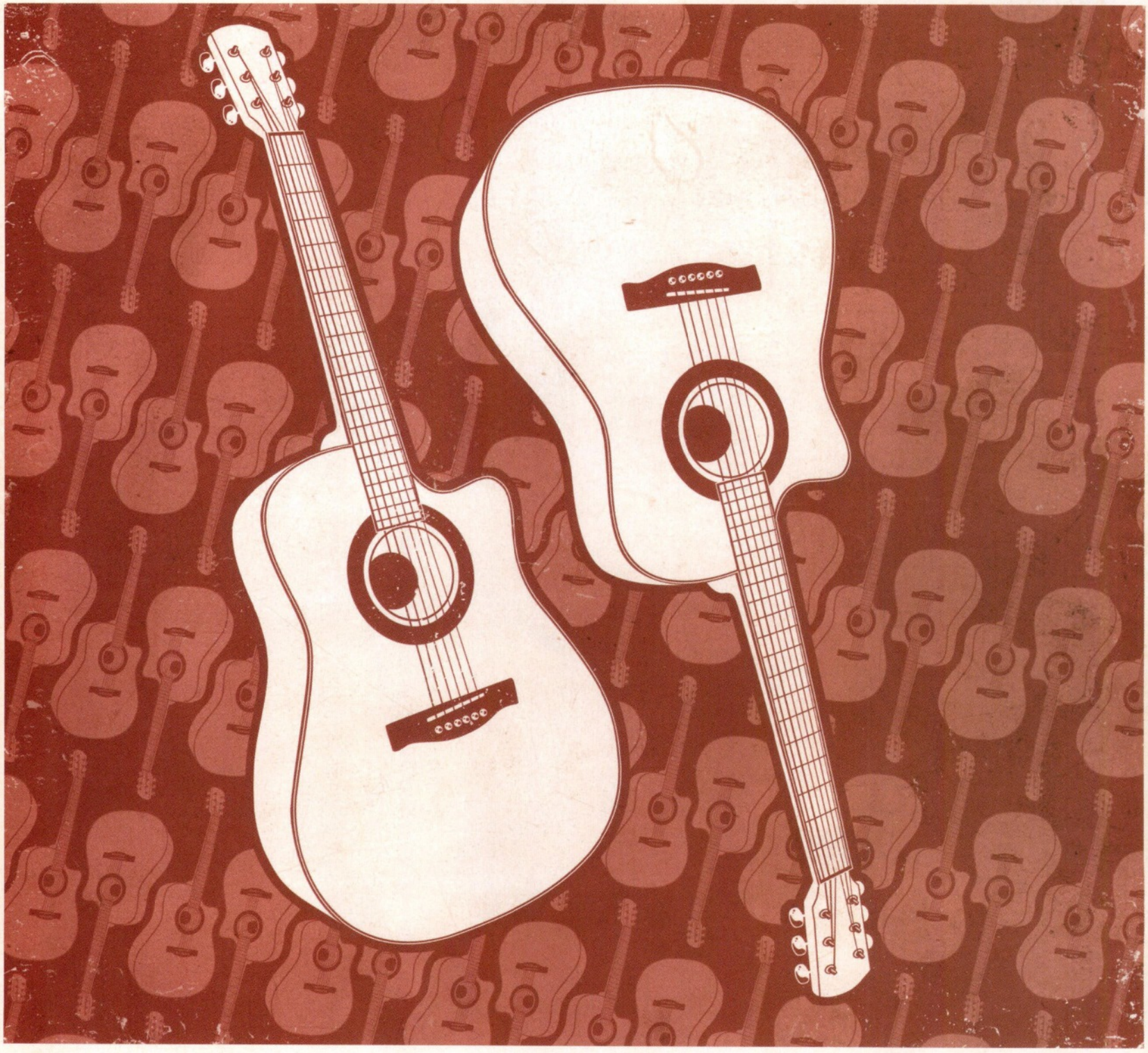


Action Reaction

This piece has no colour and relies upon the interplay of typography and symbolism to entertain. To add an aged look, use several layers of texture (an old envelope and some faded paper) and apply various blend modes to these layers to help mix everything together. For the final touch, make a stamp of all the layers at the top and apply the Color Halftone filter to it.

Lola

Start with a child's photo and apply the Cutout filter to simplify the detail and make it look more like an illustration. Create several triangular shape layers using the Pen tool (P). These both add extra colour and help direct the visual flow to the left, keeping you guessing what the child is so excited about. To add to the fun, give it a date to make it a modern relic.



INSPIRE CREATIVITY

Design a duotone poster

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to use the Pen tool effectively and how to compile various elements to form a poster

Time taken

3 hours

Trace your photos and discover how to compile elements to form a retro-inspired poster, using a limited colour palette

Once upon a time, designers had to be very selective with the colours they chose due to time consuming and complex print processes, as well as high printing costs. These days, it seems that most of the artwork we see around us is packed full of vivid colours with seemingly no limitations to the amount of colour used in a single graphic. However, limiting the number of colours used in a piece can produce some very simple but effective artwork – and we're going to show you how this can be achieved.

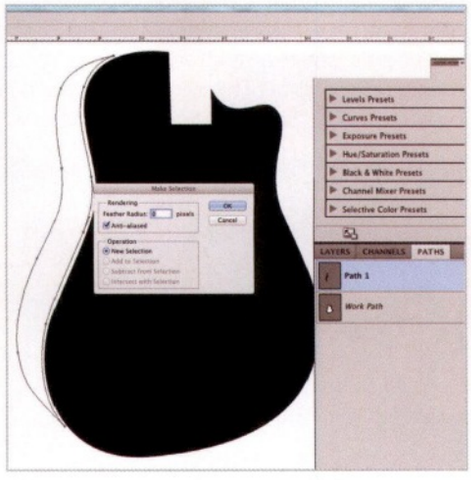
In this tutorial, we are going to design a poster using no more than three colours to achieve a highly effective retro-inspired look. We will begin by tracing a photograph by using the Pen tool, putting into practice what you may have learned in some of the other tutorials. We will then arrange the poster using a variety of skills and techniques, which include adding text and custom shapes. We will also use textures and brushes to give the poster a very natural and distressed feel, helping to emphasise the retro style of our piece.

Select an appropriate Image

01 Start by selecting a suitable image to trace. Here, we've used a guitar, but if that seems a little complex then you could choose something simpler instead, like a drum or a speaker. If you are using Elements, use the image provided in your resource pack (guitar-trace.psd) and skip to step 6.

Create a new document

02 Create a new document (Cmd/Ctrl+N) that's 235mm wide and 300mm high, then drag in your chosen image. With the Pen tool (P), begin drawing paths around the main parts your object. Before drawing your paths, make sure Paths is selected in the Options bar at the top.



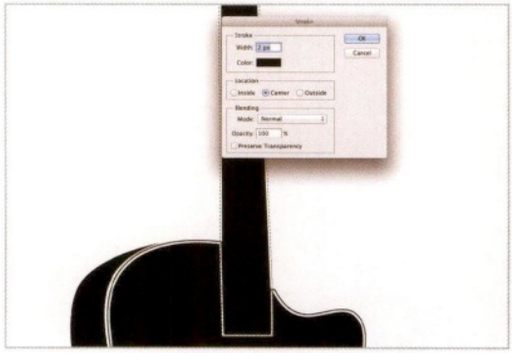
Start to trace your object

03 Be sure to close each path you create by clicking on the first anchor point in your path. When your path is complete, grab the Path Selection tool (A), Ctrl/right-click on your path and select Make Selection, then hit OK. On a new layer, Fill (Shift+F5) your selection with black.

Expert tip

Installing Brushes

Brushes can be a really handy tool when you're trying to achieve certain effects in Photoshop, such as distressing. To install your brushes into Photoshop, first select the Brush tool (B) and then open the Brush palette at the top in the Options bar. Next, click on the fly-out menu to the right of the Brush palette and select Load Brushes. A window should appear, allowing you to browse your computer and locate the brush files (.abr).

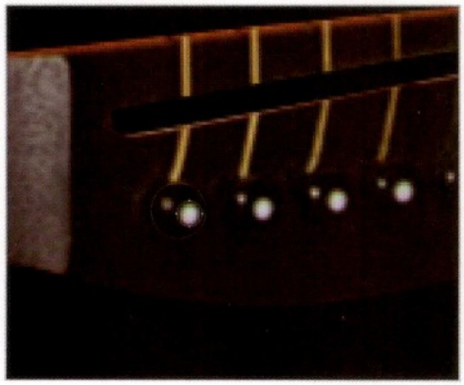


Complete your basic shapes

04 Continue to trace around the other main areas of your object, filling the paths with black along the way. You can also add a Stroke to the guitar face and the neck to add some subtle detail, but this step is an optional one as it will still look great without a Stroke.

Cut out detail

05 Now we need to cut the detail. Rasterise your Fill layers by Ctrl/right-clicking on the layers and selecting Rasterize Layer. Using the Pen tool, draw paths around the detail in your image. Instead of filling the paths, this time use the selections to cut shapes from the filled layers.

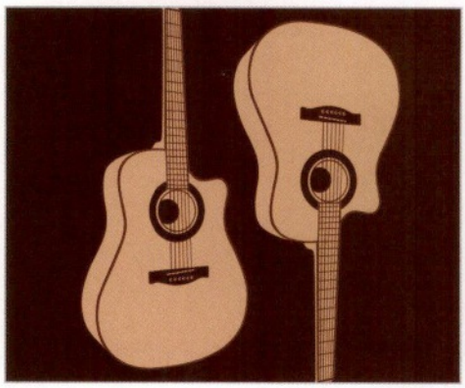


Add further detail

06 Cutting out shapes reveals certain parts of the guitar. However, we will also need to re-add details such as the bridge pins (see example) and tuning pegs at the top of the guitar. This can be achieved by creating shapes using the Ellipse tool (U).

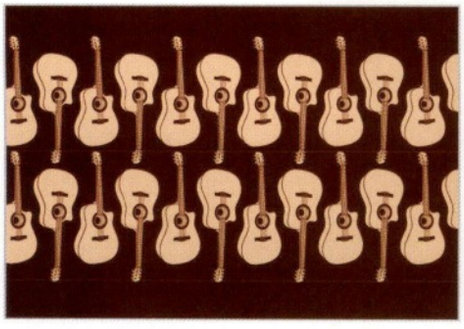
Begin arranging your poster

07 Once you have cut out and added all of your detail to your object, it is time to begin arranging your poster. Start by merging all of the layers together so that your object is just a single layer (Ctrl/right-click and then Merge Layers). Next, duplicate the layer (Layer>Duplicate Layer).



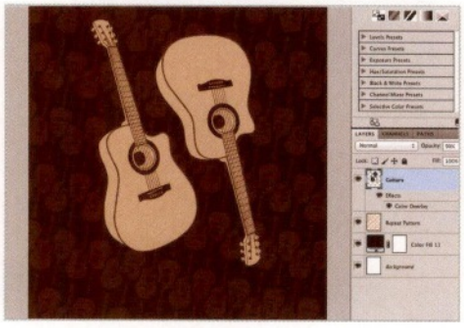
Add some colour

08 Flip the duplicated layer both horizontally and vertically by going to Edit>Transform. Merge the layers together and add a Color Overlay of #ebcdac. Create a new layer beneath your object (Cmd/Ctrl+ Shift+ N) and Fill it with #461a1a.



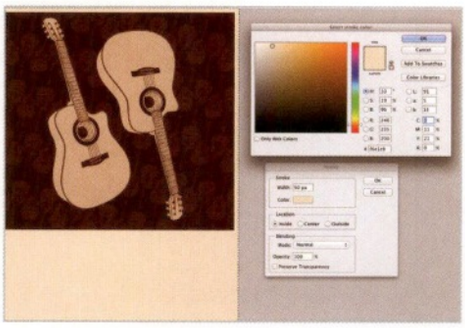
Create the repeat pattern

09 Now we want to create the repeat pattern background. Duplicate your object layer and hide the original. Reduce the size of the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+T), then duplicate and drag it to the right. Do this a few times, as shown above. Fill the entire canvas then merge all of the layers together.



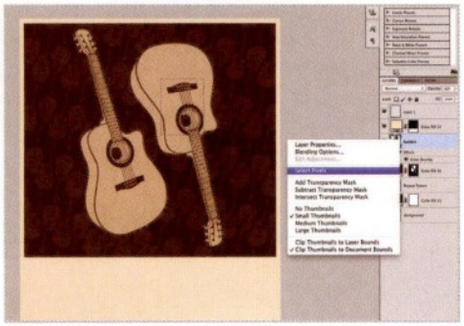
Rotate your layers

10 Once merged into a single layer, rotate (Cmd/Ctrl+T) the pattern layer clockwise slightly and reduce the Opacity to 14%. Now unhide the original layer and rotate anticlockwise slightly, until your poster looks similar to the example above. Reduce the Opacity of your object's layer to 90%.



Add a border

11 Using the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) draw a rectangle at the bottom of the poster and Fill it with #f7e1c8. Next, we want to add a border. Create a new layer and Select All (Cmd/Ctrl+A). Go to Edit>Stroke, changing the Width to 50px and Location to Inside with a colour of #f7e1c8, then hit OK.

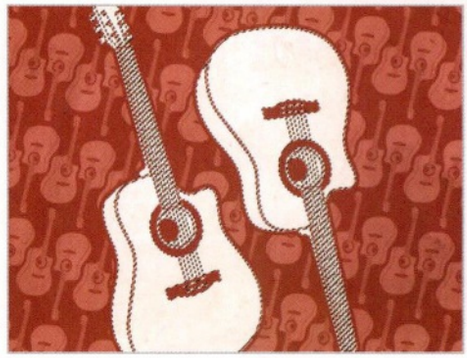


Select pixels

12 Next, Ctrl/right-click on the layer thumbnail of your main object and click Select Pixels. Go to Select>Modify> Expand, enter 10 pixels then hit OK. Now, holding Shift, use the Rectangular Marquee tool to fill in the gaps. Fill a new layer (under your object layer) with colour #441a1a.

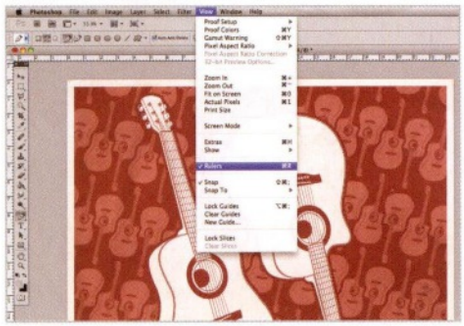
Add texture

13 Now we want to give the poster some texture. You can find a huge selection of paper textures online; we found our free paper texture on www.wegraphics.net. Making sure the object layer is at the top, place your texture beneath the object layer. Change the texture's blend mode to Overlay.



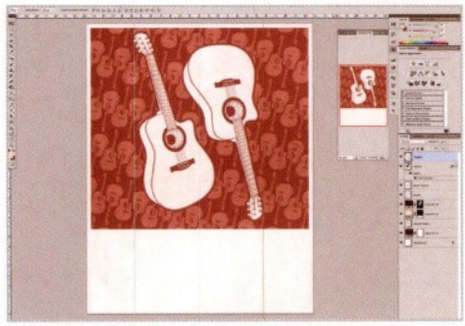
Add texture to object

14 Ctrl/right-click on the layer thumbnail of your main object and click Select Pixels. Select your texture layer then copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C) and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+P) onto a new layer above your object layer. Change the layer's blend mode to Overlay.



Turn on rulers

15 The next stage is to add text to your image to give it some meaning or purpose (see the expert tip on converting your image into a gig poster). Before we add the text, we want to add some guides to our canvas. Turn on Rulers with Cmd/Ctrl+R.



Drag in guides

16 Click and hold on the leftmost ruler, then drag to the right to pull a guide onto your canvas. Place three guides: one in the centre of the canvas, one lining up with leftmost edge of the left guitar and one lining up with the rightmost edge of the right guitar.

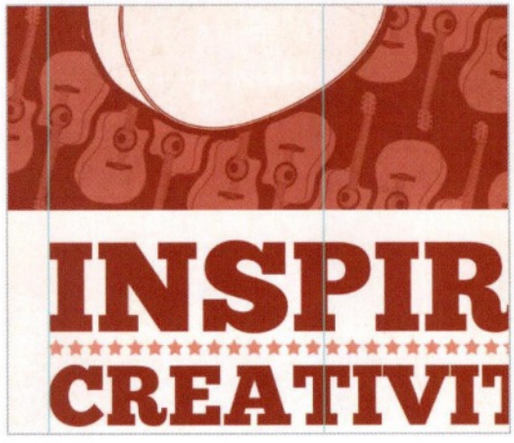
Add your text

17 Using pre-installed fonts or fonts downloaded from the internet, add three lines of text using the colour #a3524f, leaving a gap between each line. We've used the fonts ChunkFive (www.fontsquirrel.com) and League Gothic (www.theleagueofmoveabletype.com), as both of these fonts can be downloaded online for free.

Expert tip

Making a gig poster

If you have used the guitar as your main object, or any other music related item, it's very easy to convert your poster into a retro style gig poster with only a few tweaks. Simply change the words to band names, with the headlining band as the topmost title. Also, add the little extras you would normally find on a gig poster, such as price, date, entry time, etc, beneath the band names. You can also change the main colour to a more faded looking one to give it an even more authentic feel.

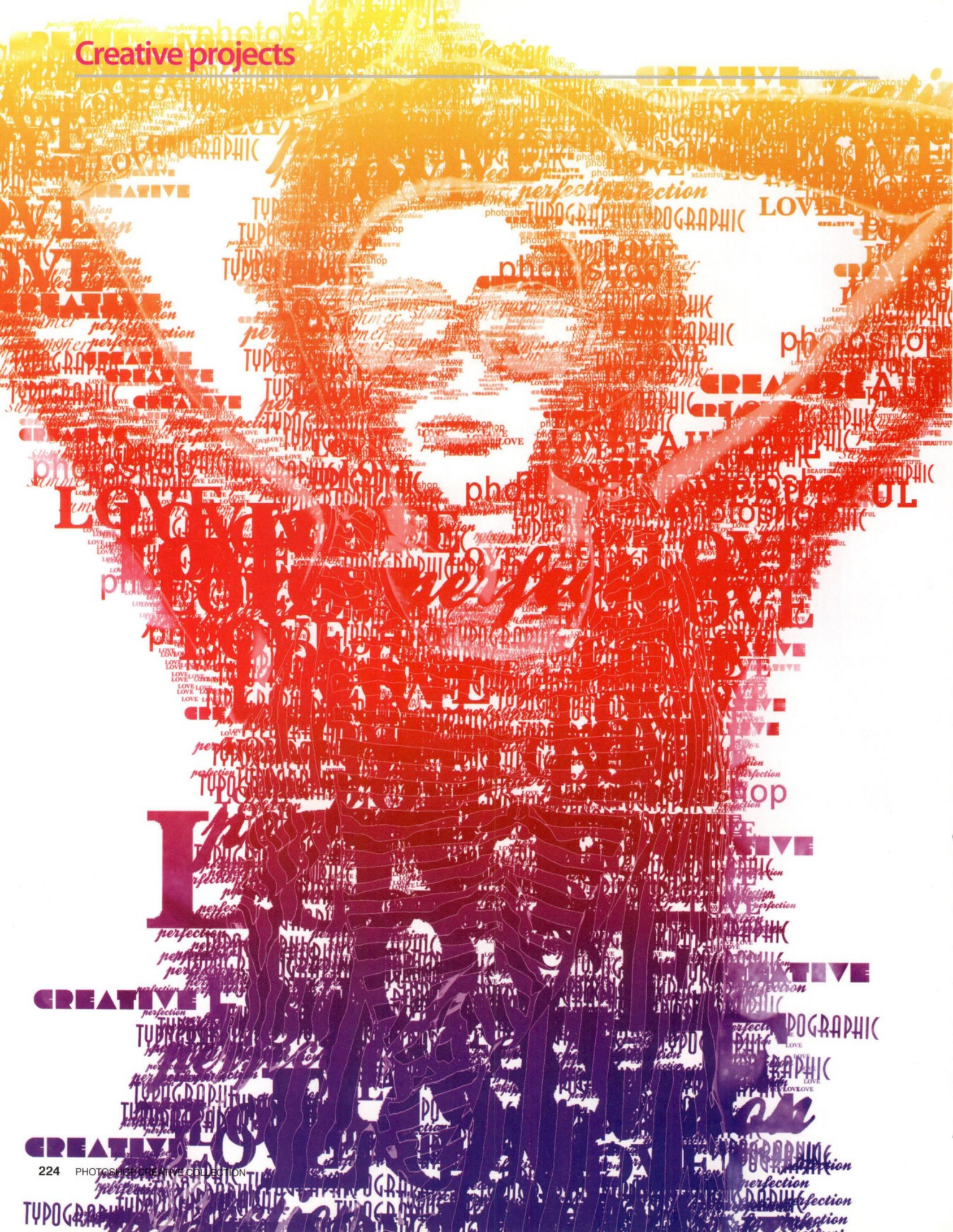


Fill in the gaps

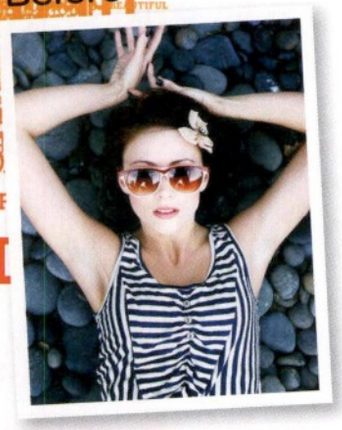
18 Next, it's time to fill in the gaps. Underneath the top line of text, create a line of stars by using the Custom Shape tool (U). Simply drag the shape and copy and paste it several times, use the colour #e7a091.

Distress with brushes

19 Create a new layer and move it so it is the topmost layer. Now, using a grunge brush (see expert tip) with the colour set to #fdf7f1, begin to paint randomly over your image, creating a distressed effect which will make your poster look more authentic. Give it a final check to finish.


LOVE
perfection
CREATIVE
TYPOGRAPHIC
photoshop

Before



Create type portraits

A picture is worth a thousand words, so why not use them?

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to use the Type tool, layers, Brush tool and Quick Mask mode

Time taken

2 hours

This tutorial is all about type. It'll show you what you can achieve using the letters of the alphabet to create stunning artwork and prove that there's much more to typography than what you find on your bookshelves.

We'll show the many different ways of manipulating, skewing and cloning typography to create inspiring portraiture that you can use to present to your family and friends. Make a special gift or print it out onto a birthday card. The potential is limitless and you can be even more creative and experiment with different techniques.

The more work you put into this the better the outcome will be. Despite that, it's still easy to do and doesn't require much work.

Be sure to start off with a high-quality photograph, something with a simple composition, bold shapes and interesting elements that you know will work well if you stripped it away and replaced it with type; good contrast is the key.

Picture perfect

01 Let's start with our original image, opening it in Photoshop and resizing if necessary. Based on the composition of this one, it will be good to separate the background from the subject, to make working with it much easier.

Separate the layers

02 We're using the Quick Mask mode and Brush tool to paint the background. In order to activate the Quick Mask tool, click on the icon at the bottom of the Toolbar (or type the letter Q). Use whatever method you find easiest to separate the background from the foreground.

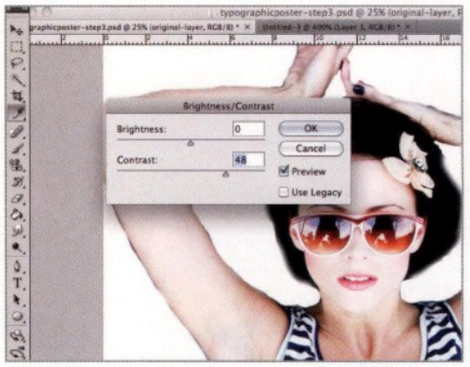
Expert tip

Quick Mask selection

One of the easiest ways of making selections is by using Quick Mask mode. This is activated by typing Q on your keyboard or clicking the icon in the Toolbar. Use the Brush tool and find the right hardness or softness to paint in the desired area. Once that is done, click on the mask button again and you will find your selection is encircled with the marching ants. You can invert the selection by clicking Select>Inverse.

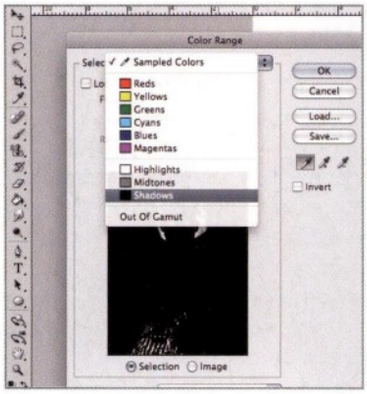
Exit Quick Mask

03 Now that we have selected the background, exit Quick Mask mode and hit Ctrl/Cmd+J. This will separate the selection into its very own layer. Click on the eye icon to hide it and delete the original selection so you have a white background.



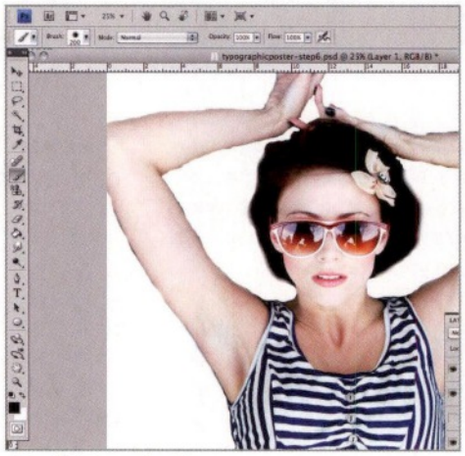
Contrast

04 Add contrast and maybe adjust the brightness of the image. This is to ensure that the image remains as legible and clean as possible. Sometimes the quality of light makes the picture look a little flat, so this will add depth to the skin tones.



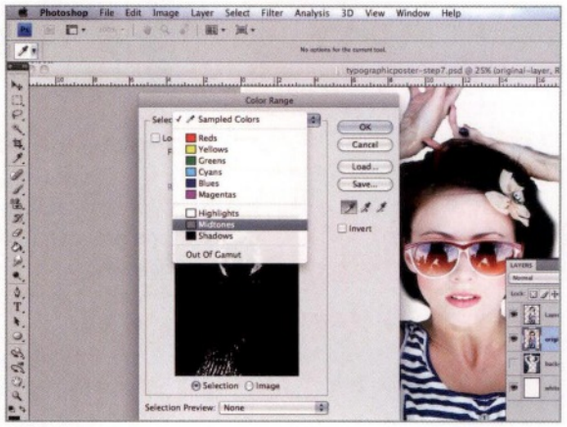
Shadows

05 Now we need to select the shadows of the image. To do this we go to the Select drop-down menu in the Color Range dialog and choose Shadows.



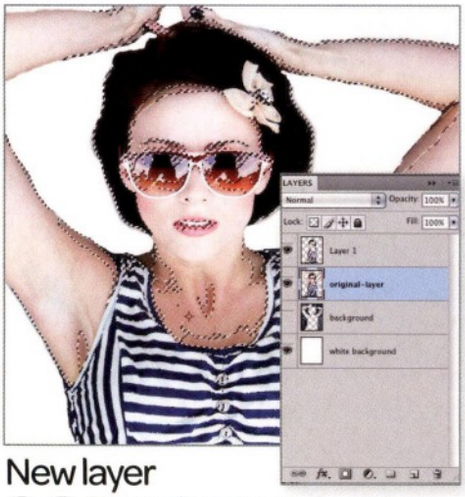
Ctrl/Cmd+J

06 Separate the selection onto a new layer by typing in Ctrl/Cmd+J. This is a great time-saving shortcut to use.



Midtones

07 Selecting your main layer again, we need to isolate the midtones. To do this we go to the Select drop-down menu in the Color Range dialog, choose Midtones and click OK.



New layer

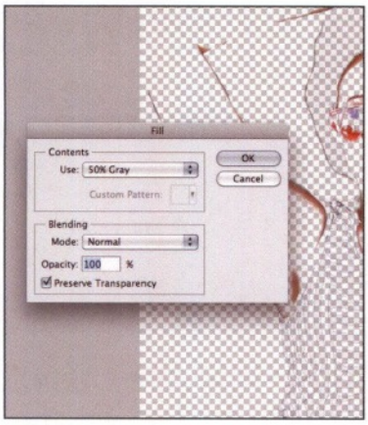
08 We need to separate the midtone selection onto its very own layer. Again do this using the magic shortcut by typing in Ctrl/Cmd+J.

Block colour

09 Ensure that the shadow layer is selected. Go to Edit>Fill or hit Shift+Backspace. A dialog box appears, so use the black colour and have Preserve Transparency selected. Click OK.

Shadow layer

10 We needed to go back to our shadow layer selection and fill this with a block colour so that it will be easier to work with when we start filling things out.



Block the midtones

11 It's time to do the same thing but this time with the midtone layer. Make sure the correct layer is selected before going to Edit>Fill. Use 50% Gray and Preserve Transparency, then click OK.

Merge the layers

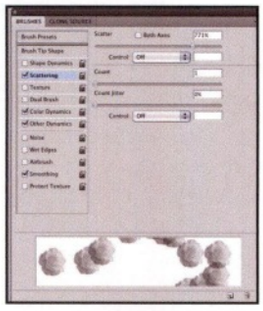
12 Now that we've created our layers and blocked them in two colours, we need to merge the two together. Select both the shadow and midtone layers, Ctrl/right-click and select Merge (you can also click on Layer>Merge Layers).

New document

13 Click File>New to create a new document. It should have a white background with black selected as your Foreground colour. Click on the Type tool (T) and type a word in your chosen font.

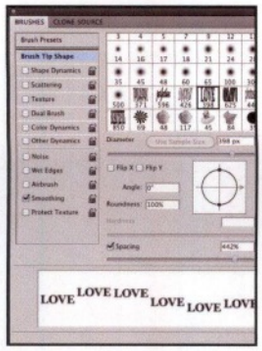
Use the Brush tool

The Brush tool may seem simple at first, but it's a very powerful tool



The basics

Select the Brush tool (B). At the top of the screen you'll see the Options bar with all of the settings available. Click on the Brush drop-down and you'll be able to adjust the size and hardness of your chosen tip.



Brush presets

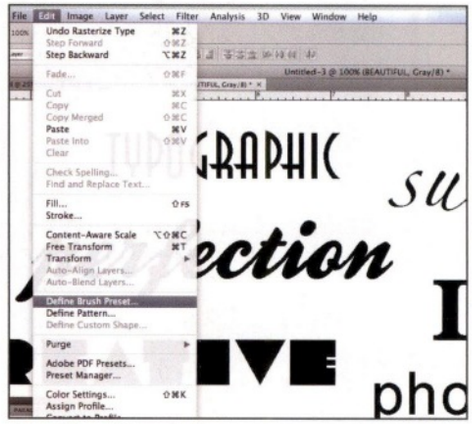
Having selected a brush (you can choose a custom-made one), launch the Presets palette via Window>Brush. This box contains powerful effects that you could use to experiment with. Change the size, angle and spacing of the brush.

Cool effects

If you press Shift and drag the brush to the side it will draw in a straight line, so if you create a brush with text and adjust the spacing you'll be able to get straight lines of text.

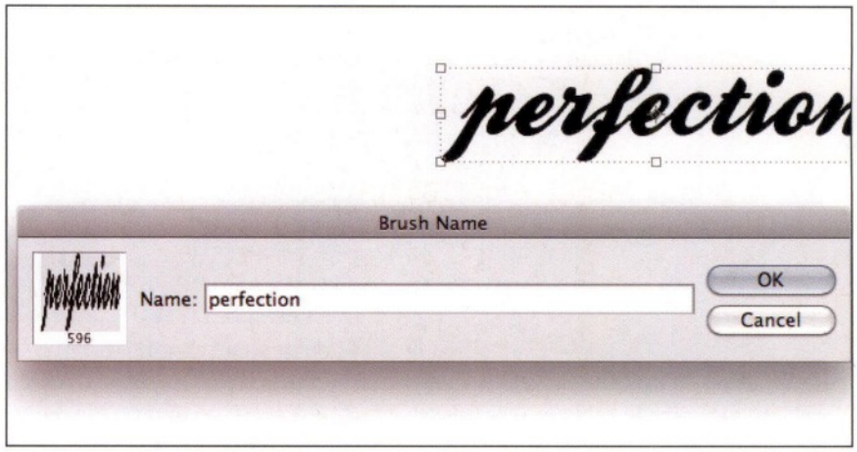
Creative placement

14 Once we've created the type, Ctrl/right-click on the layer and rasterise the text so that it converts from an editable layer to an image. You can't go back now and edit the text – so make sure you've spelt everything correctly!



Define brush

15 We will now turn the type into a brush. To do this all we have to do is select a word layer and click Edit>Define Brush.



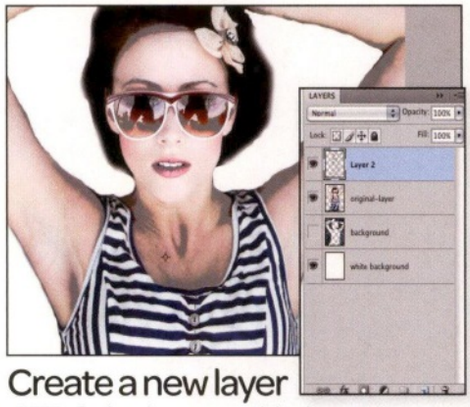
Give them a name

16 Give each of your brushes a name. Everything you create will be stored in the Brush tool selection. Now repeat steps 13-16 for each word. It is important to do it separately as this ensures you get the correct brush.

Expert tip

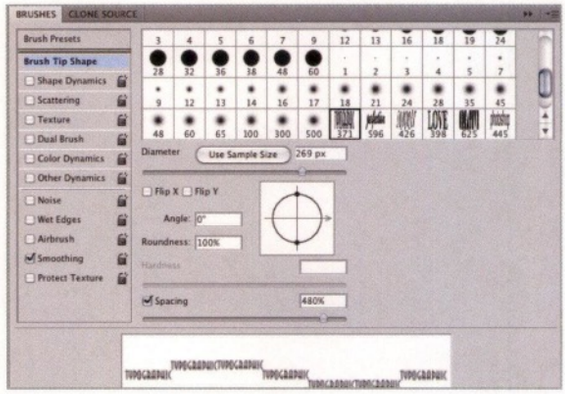
How to use gradients

Gradients are amazing effects you can add to your work. Ensure the Preview button is selected so that your work updates as you make changes. Play around with the opacity to reduce or increase the intensity. You also have a drop-down enabling you to select blending modes so you can lighten, darken or even multiply the gradient. Give it a go; you never know what effect you could discover by accident.



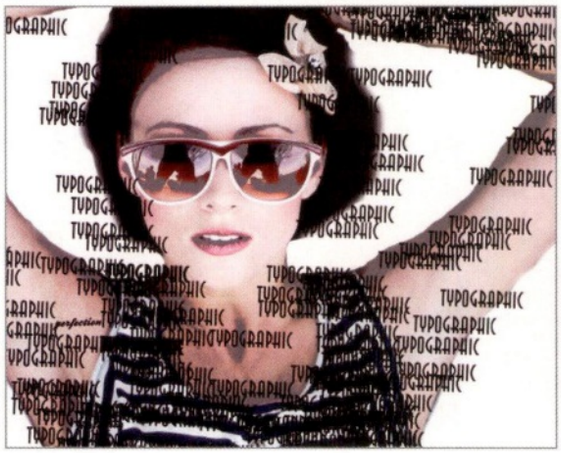
Create a new layer

17 Go back to your original portrait document and create a new layer. Click on the new layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette to do this and then click on the Brush tool and choose the type brush we recently created.



Brush palette

18 Now we get to see what our custom brush tips look like, so click on Window>Brush to load the Brush palette. Here we need to select Brush Tip Shape and experiment with the Spacing, Angle and Diameter settings for the brush.

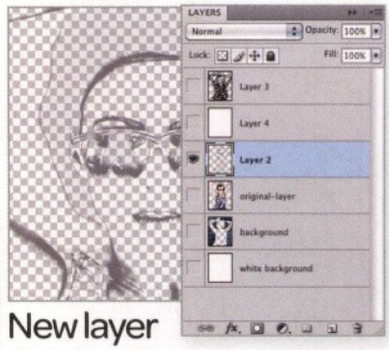


Brush away

19 Start filling in the image with the word but try not to be too heavy handed; use this as space to experiment, ensuring you're on the right layer.

Keep brushing

20 Continue experimenting with all your brushes and start building up the portrait. Try out different sizes and your other custom-made brushes.

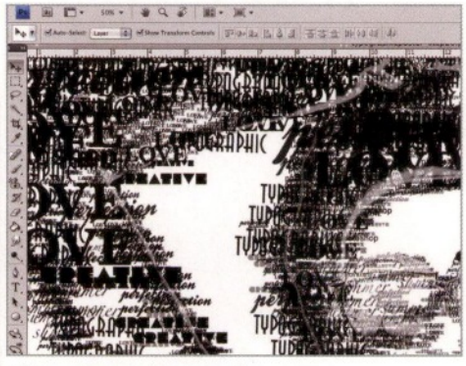


New layer

21 Create a new white layer and drag it below your typography elements. Hide all the layers except the black and grey one, hit Ctrl/Cmd+A to select everything and Ctrl/Cmd+C to copy. Click on the Add Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette.

New layer mask

22 When you have added a layer mask to the typographic layer, hold Alt/Opt and click on the new layer mask thumbnail. This ensures you've selected the right element. Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste the black and grey layer in the mask.

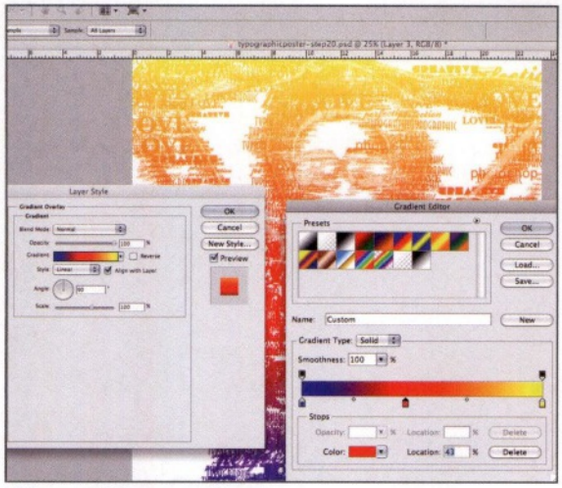


Black and grey layer

23 Deselect the layer (Ctrl/Cmd+D) and then click off. You'll notice that the black and grey layer gives a really ghostly addition to the typography. This just helps keep the structure of the layout – you are free to remove it if it doesn't work with your composition at the end.

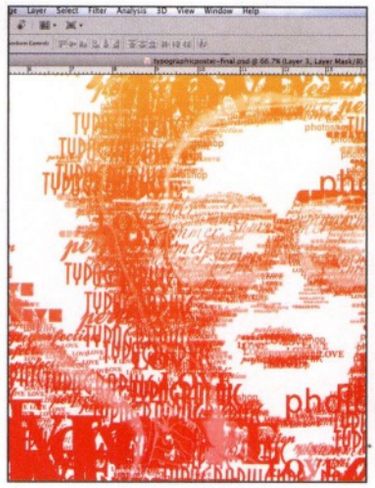
Gradient overlay

24 Now we're at the stage where we can add a gradient effect. To do this we need to go to the Layers palette and click on the FX icon. Click on the Gradient Overlay layer effect to view the dialog box.



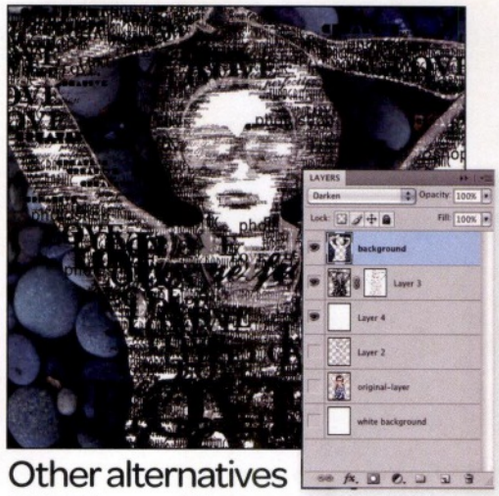
Play with gradients

25 Now that the Gradient Overlay dialog box is open, click on the gradient colour and the Gradient Editor will open, enabling you to play with different effects. Stay here for a while until you are sure that you've got it right for your portrait.



Add more colours

26 You can easily finish here, or you could continue playing around with more colours. Keep saving your file, though, so you don't lose your hard work.



Other alternatives

27 You can still carry on experimenting and achieve lots of different variants. For example, the Background layer here is placed on top of the type and the blending mode set to Darken to give a really cool effect. Go forth and experiment!

Closer look Let's summarise

Take a look at the key tools and techniques used to achieve these effects

BIG OR SMALL
Use the [key to make the brush smaller or the] key to make it larger while you paint

BRUSH TOOL
The Brush tool was used to paint the type onto the canvas. Type B to get to it quickly

GRADIENT BLENDS
The colours are achieved through layer effects. You can switch them on and off using the eye icon

POSITIVE SPACE
Without the Spacing option available in the presets you would not be able to get the right look, so use this liberally

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Create a jigsaw-puzzle effect using layer styles

Time taken

2 hours

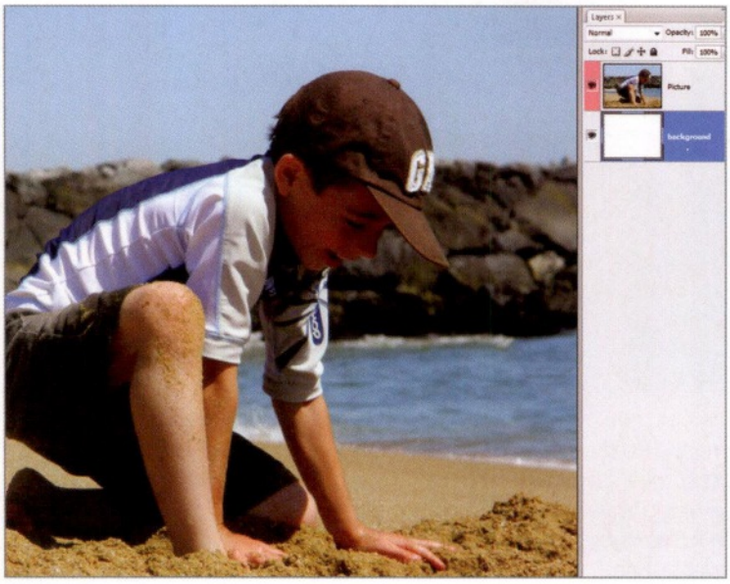
Turn photos into jigsaws

Learn how to use layer styles and handy shortcuts to create a 3D jigsaw-puzzle effect to showcase your favourite shots

You don't need any extra plug-ins to accomplish this effect because the textures are already installed on your hard drive when you install Photoshop. Layer styles create the illusion that the photo is made up of small puzzle pieces, but we can take things even further by extruding a layer to give a 3D appearance. Although some versions of Photoshop have dedicated 3D tools, we are going to do this with the standard features available to everyone. Download the supplied images or try this out with your own family shots.

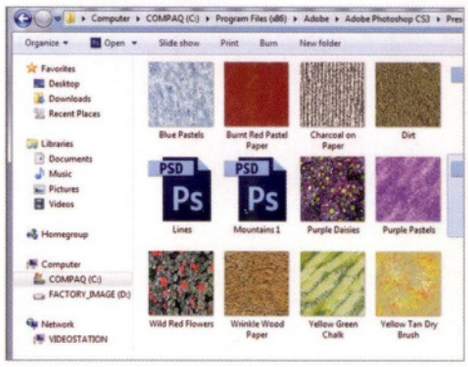
Turn photos into jigsaws

PHOTOSHOP CS5 AND ABOVE | **WORKS WITH**



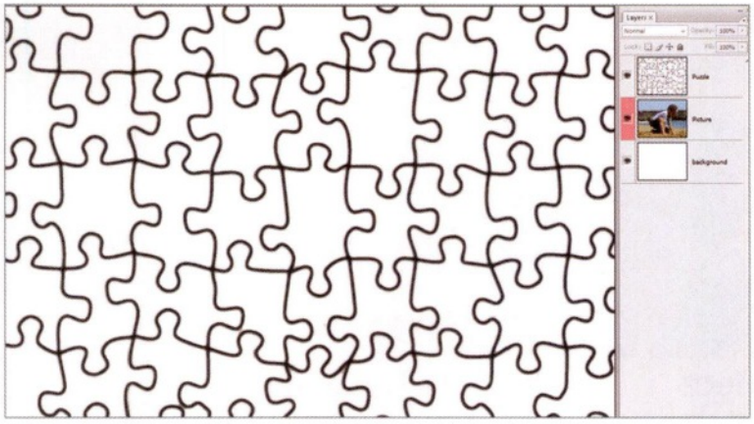
Create a white background

01 First open the supplied 'child.psd' image and, in the Layers palette, Ctrl/right-click and choose Layer Properties. Name it Picture. Create a new layer under this image and fill with solid white using the Paint Bucket tool. Call this layer Background Fill.



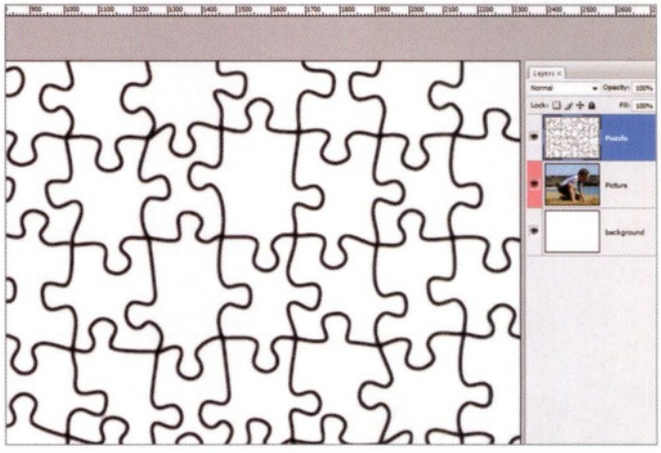
Find the jigsaw

02 Some versions of Photoshop ship with a ready-made jigsaw puzzle texture. To find this, open Applications/Program Files, go to Photoshop>Presets>Texture and find the 'Puzzle.psd' file. If you don't have it, use the supplied version.



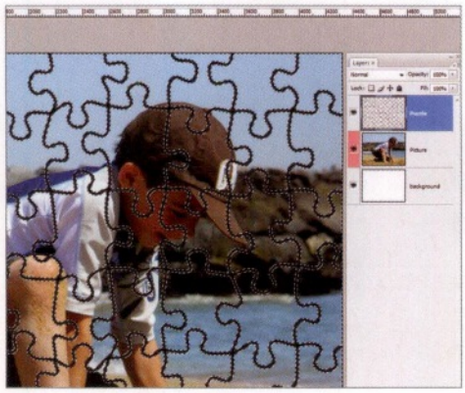
Adjust the size

03 Copy the puzzle file, paste it in at the top-left corner over the Picture layer and name it Puzzle. Hold Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform command, hold Shift and drag the corner until you cover the whole image (the puzzle in this tutorial is 60 pieces).



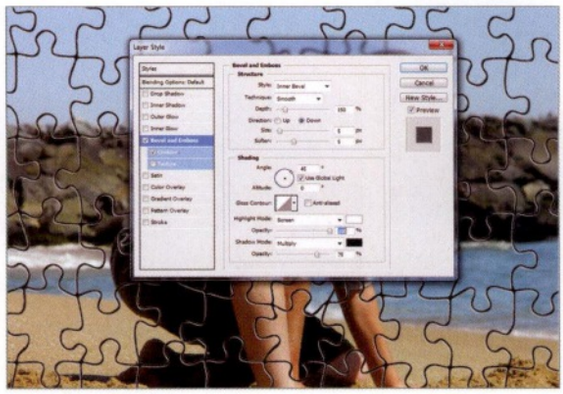
Clean the borders

04 Use a hard brush, set the Foreground colour to white and start painting over the edge pieces. This will take the small ones out and give a straight edge to the puzzle image.



Delete the white colour

05 On the Puzzle layer, select the Magic Wand tool, set Tolerance to 100 and uncheck the Contiguous box. Click on the white colour to select it and then press the Backspace key on your keyboard to delete. You can refine the edges to give a clean look.



Create 3D

06 Double-click on the Puzzle layer to open the Layer Style dialog. Click on the Bevel and Emboss box and change the Depth to 150%, Direction to Down, Size to 5px, Soften to 5px and Angle to 45. Tick Use Global Light, set Highlight to 100% and then click OK. In the Layers palette, lower the Fill to 25%.

Expert tip

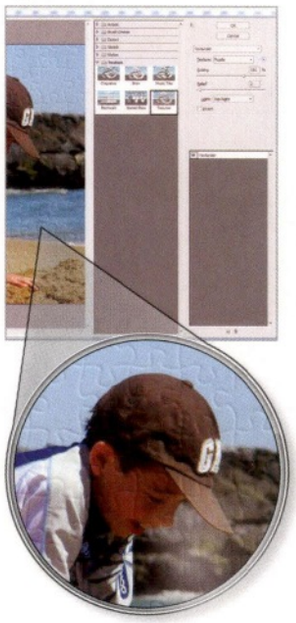
Use puzzle shapes

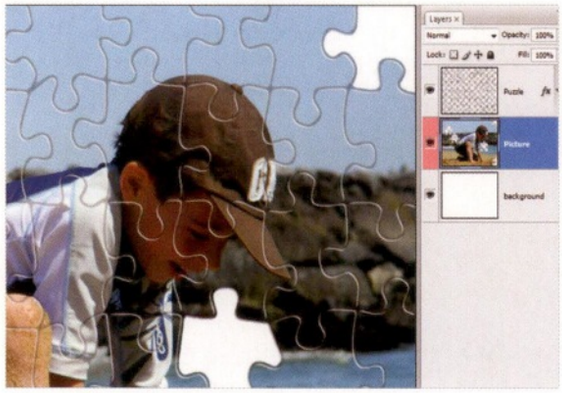
If you want to create just the puzzle shape, you can use custom shapes already available in Photoshop. Go to the Toolbar and open the Custom Shape tool. In the Shape drop-down menu in the top bar, click on the right arrow and load the Objects group. You will find four different puzzle shapes so just select and draw the shape into your project. Use the Path Selection tool to select, Ctrl/right-click to Make Selection and apply the Bevel and Emboss style.

Expert tip

Using the Texturizer

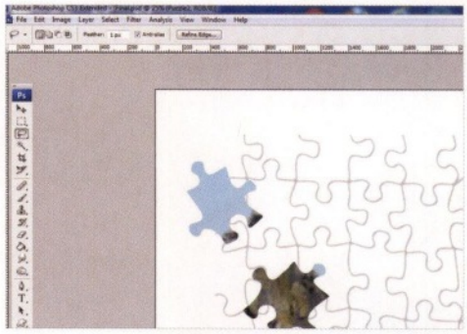
If you are using a small image, you can apply the Texturizer filter. Select the image layer and go to Filter>Texture> Texturizer. You will probably have to load the puzzle texture into the drop-down menu, so click on the small arrow at the right side and click Load Texture. Locate the 'Puzzle.psd' file as in Step 2 and load it. Scale the puzzle image and choose the top-right light to give a natural appearance to the effect.





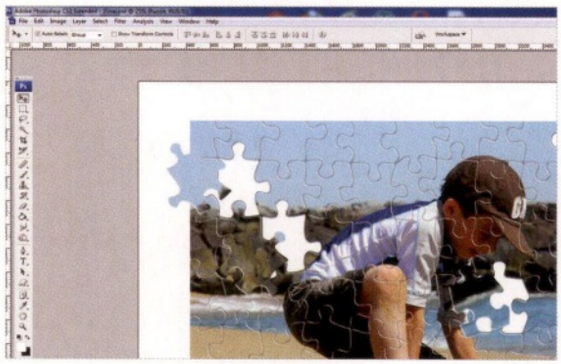
Cut the pieces

07 Select and link the Picture and Puzzle layers (Ctrl/right-click>Link Layers), then scale to 80%. On the Puzzle layer, use the Magic Wand tool to select a few pieces. Click on the Picture layer, copy and paste, and name this new layer Puzzle 2.



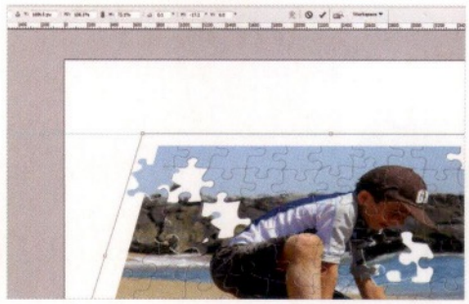
Spin and move pieces

08 Select the Puzzle 2 layer, use the Lasso tool and select each piece individually. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool, then spin and move each piece to distribute around the image. To help visualise this, click the eye icon next to the Picture layer to turn its visibility off.



Shortcut to layer effect

09 Now you need to apply the same Bevel and Emboss effect to the Puzzle 2 layer. You can either repeat the settings from before or simply click on the FX icon next to the Puzzle layer, hold the Opt/Alt key and drag over to the Puzzle 2 layer.

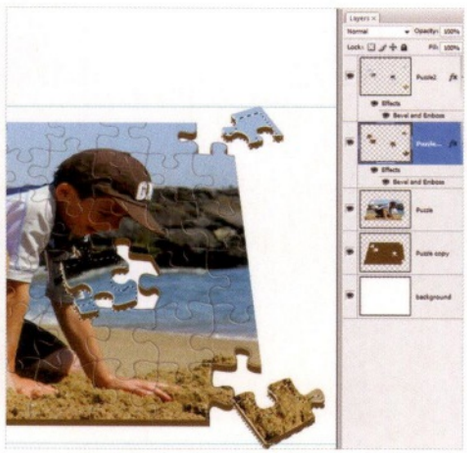


Angle the perspective

10 In order to give a more realistic effect, merge the Puzzle and the Picture layers and then link with the Puzzle 2 layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform tool, hold the Cmd/Ctrl keys and drag the corners until you get a nice perspective, as if it were laid on a table.

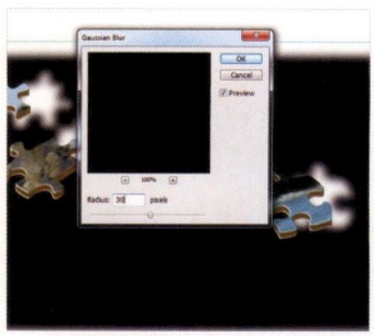
Extrusion effect

11 To create the effect of depth on the puzzle pieces, duplicate the image layer and select it. With a brown brush, paint over the image using a large tip. Keep the layer selected and choose the Move tool, hold the Opt/Alt key and shift the duplicate to the right and down. Deselect with Cmd/Ctrl+D.



Repeat the process

12 Repeat this for the Puzzle 2 layer; duplicate the layer, disable the layer effects, apply the same brown and keep the layer selected. Now click on the Move tool and hold the Opt/Alt key and shift the image.



Add shadows

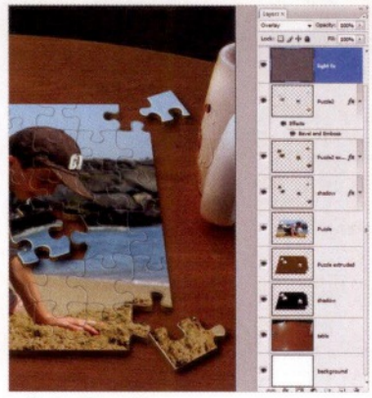
13 Duplicate the image layer again, select the whole image and fill it with black. Open Filter>Blur>Gaussian blur and set the Radius to 30px. Make sure the Move tool is selected and press the arrow key a few times to move the shadow just a little. Repeat the process for the Puzzle 2 layer.

Burn for contrast

14 It's time to use the Burn tool to add more shadows on the extruded layer. Select the tool from the Toolbar and use a soft brush with Size 100, Range Highlights and Exposure 50%. Start painting over to add more shadows on the image.

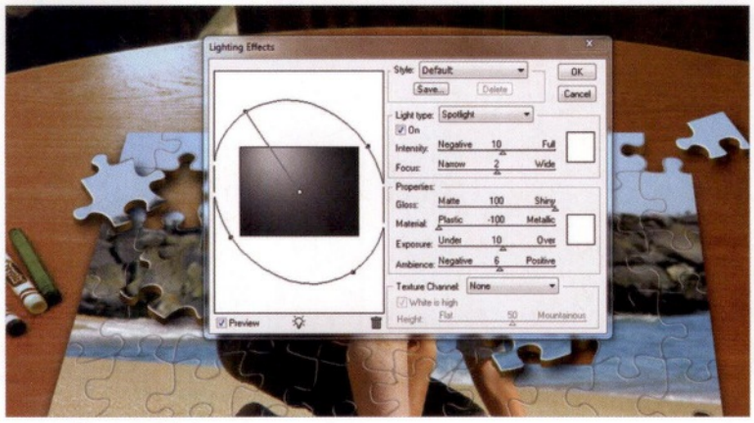
Add the final image

15 Open the file 'table.psd'. Drag into your project and use the Free Transform tool to adjust the perspective if necessary. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation adjustment and lower the Saturation slider to -25.



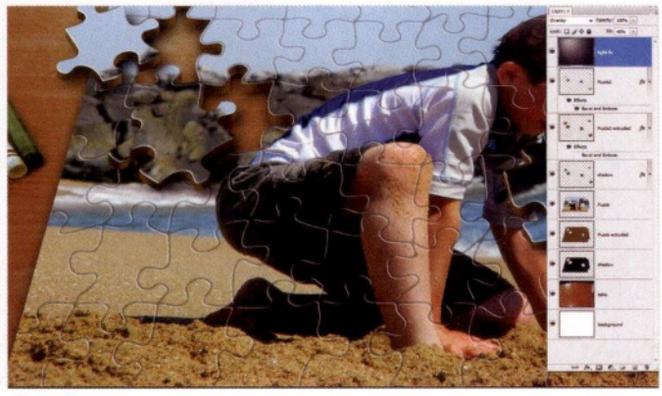
Lighting layer

16 Hold the Opt/Alt key and click on Create a New Layer in the Layers palette. In the dialog box change the name to Light FX, Mode to Overlay and tick Fill with Overlay-Neutral Color (50% Gray).



Set the ambiance

17 On the Light FX layer, apply Filter>Render>Lighting Effects. Choose the Light Type: Spotlight, change the Intensity to 10, Focus to 2, Gloss to 100, Material to -100, Exposure to 10, Ambience to 6 and Material to -85. Click OK. In the Layers palette decrease the Fill to 40%.



Add texture

18 To finish things off, click on the extruded layer, open Filter>Texture>Texturizer and, in the Texture drop-down menu, choose Burlap, change the Scaling to 150% and the Relief to 2. Set the Light to Top Light and then repeat the whole process for the Puzzle 2 extruded layer as well.

Expert tip

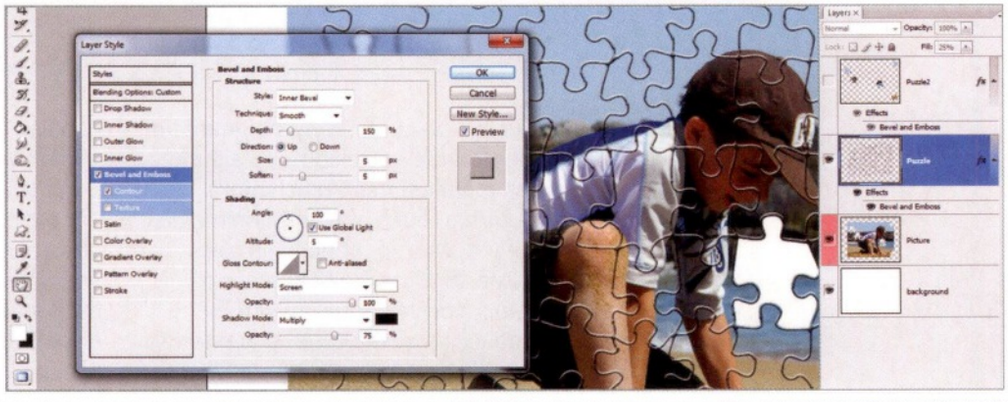
Drop shadow

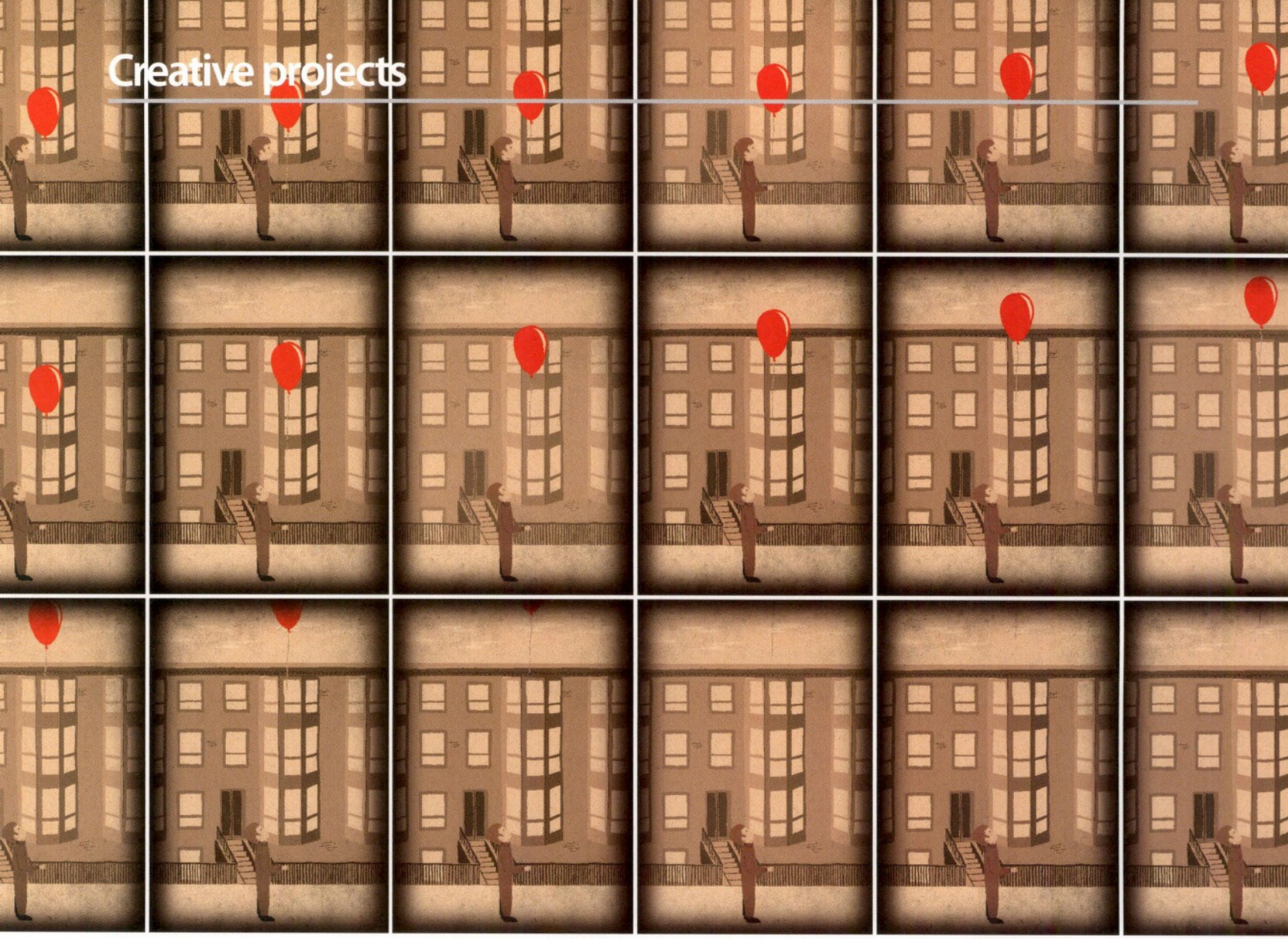
You can use the Drop Shadow layer style to add depth to your subjects. Double-click on the layer to open the Layer Style dialog then click and open the Drop Shadow panel. Uncheck the Use Global Light box (to avoid changing the light and shading on all layers). Alter the Distance, Size and Spread until you find the desired effect. Don't increase the values too much, as this will give the appearance the puzzle pieces are floating around.

Caution with the shading Set the right direction and angle

When you apply the Bevel and Emboss style you should pay attention to two important details – the first is the direction of the bevel and emboss (up or down) and the second is the angle of the shading.

If not set properly, they will give you a weird final effect and make the puzzle shading look inverted. Always try the different angles until you find one that looks more natural for the puzzle pieces.





Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Learn to animate still images into simple flipbook cartoons

Time taken

2 hours

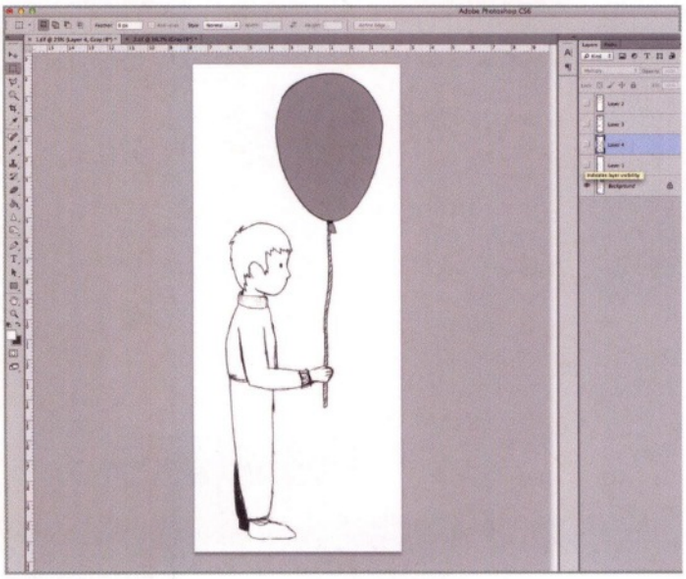
Create a fun flipbook

How to make an animated flipbook using Photoshop's simple tools

Flipbooks can be cute, funny, poignant and very memorable – sometimes a simple idea can manifest itself much more powerfully with a touch of animation magic. For those of you who spent hours in class animating little stick men in the corner of exercise books, you'll be familiar with the process. And for those of you who are new to the idea, it really is very simple. By drawing a new image on each page you can bring your doodles to life, so put your imagination into motion with the simple flick of a page!

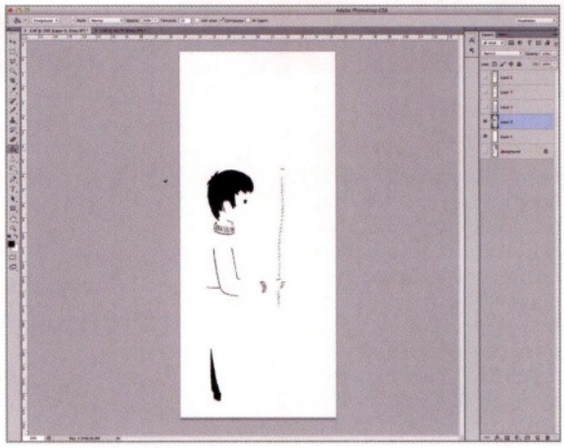
In this tutorial we'll show you how to create a more crafted version of those humble, classroom beginnings so that you can wow your friends and bring your own characters onto the page. If your version of Photoshop doesn't have the Timeline function, you can use the layers and grouping to separate the frames instead when following the steps.

Create a fun flipbook



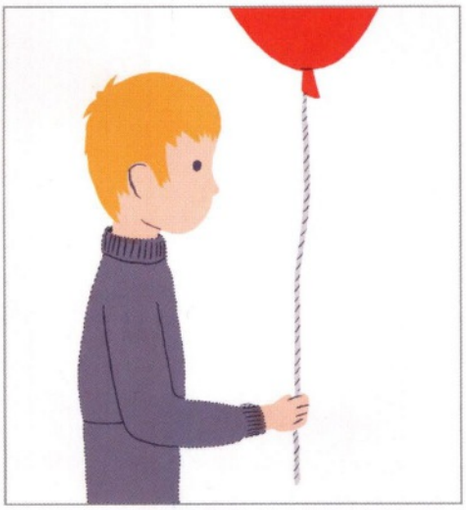
Choose the subject

01 For this project we will use a boy as the subject, and the concept is that as the book is flipped he will let go of the balloon and watch it rise into the sky.



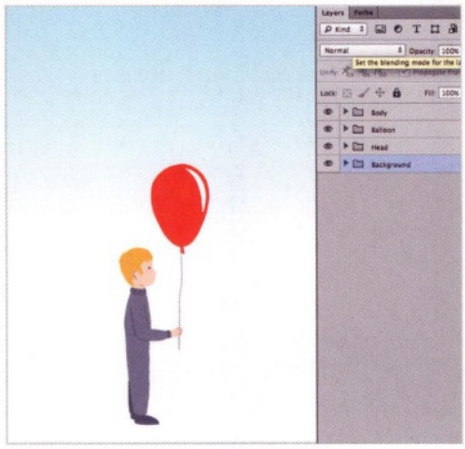
Scan your image

02 Create the image by tracing a sketch, one drawing for each colour that you plan on using. The layer shown is the black one.



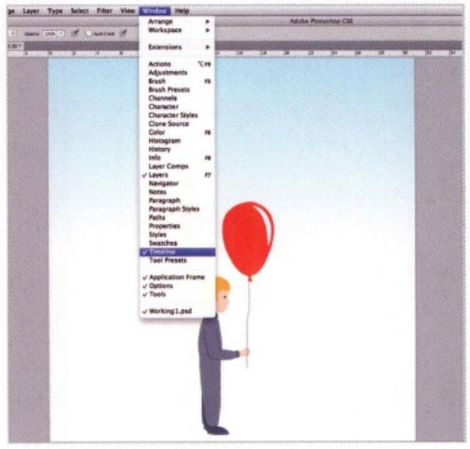
Colour your character

03 Use the Magic Wand (W) and Paint Bucket tools (G) to fill in the colours of your character. Create a new layer for each colour as you go.



Group the moving parts

04 Once you've created all of the separate layers of colour, group the parts that you intend to change in the Layers palette (via the Create New Group icon at the bottom) and rename by double-clicking on them and typing.

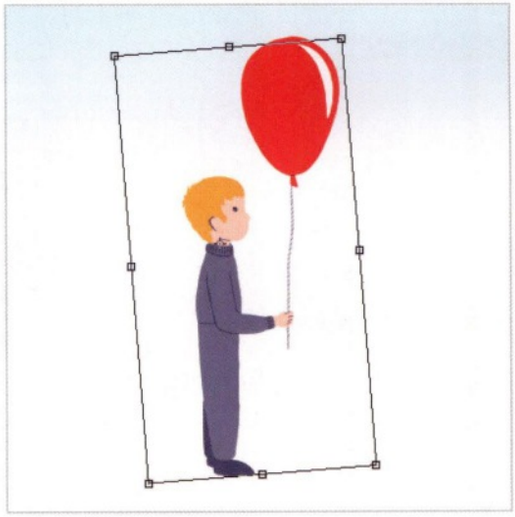


Open the Timeline

05 Open the Timeline palette (Window>Timeline) ready to create the frames. It is worth trying to familiarise yourself with the look of this interface – the icons at the bottom will be used quite a lot later in the tutorial.

Duplicate groups

06 Now that each moveable part is in a group, you can duplicate these to create each new frame. First of all, let's concentrate on tilting his head back.



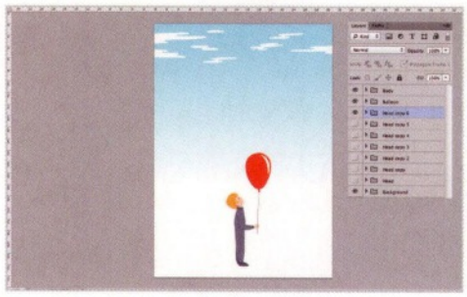
Making the head move

07 With the new group selected in the Layers palette, transform it to rotate his head back (Cmd/Ctrl+T). Make sure you move the anchor point to his neck. It might help at this point to turn off the visibility of the original group that you aren't editing.

Expert tip

Go frame by frame

Be careful what you edit in each frame of the timeline, as certain effects will apply to every frame in the whole animation while others will only change that particular frame. For instance, if you transform a layer via the Edit menu it will have the same effect throughout, but if you simply move a layer it will only affect that one frame.

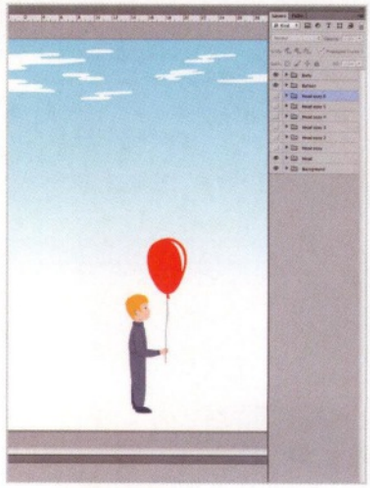


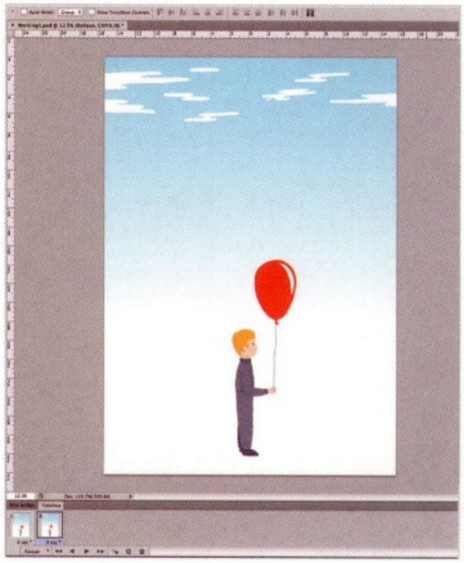
Little by little

08 Repeat this another six times, each time copying the previous group for continuity and making a slight change. Now you will have six groups, each with a slightly more tilted version of the head.

Clean it up

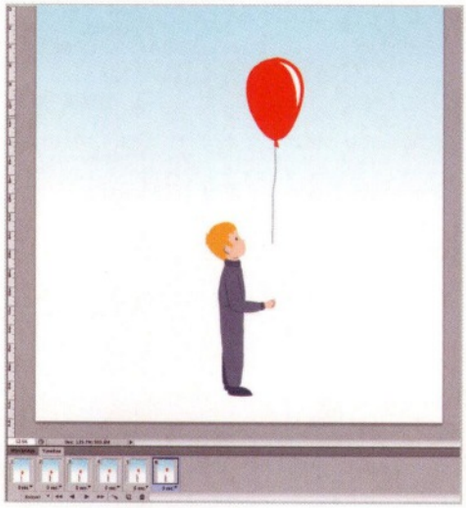
09 Before going too far, it might be worth going into each group to make sure that the image fits together properly. If there's a gap from moving the image, use the Brush (B) to clean it up.





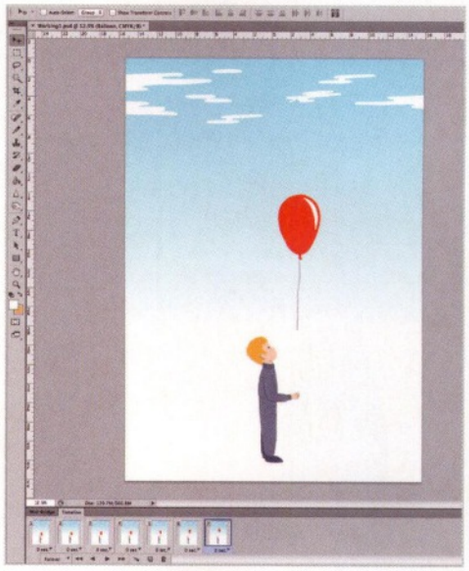
Time to animate

10 While making sure that only your first head group is visible, in the Timeline palette select the Duplicate Selected Frames button at the bottom. You will now be working on the next frame.



Moving the head

11 By clicking on each new frame that you create in the timeline you will be editing in a new workspace. To move the head you need to make the corresponding group visible in each frame (for example Head Copy 3 in Frame 3 is the only head group visible in this frame).

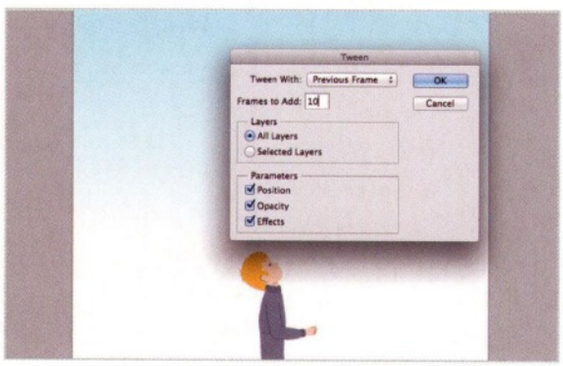


Moving the balloon

12 Now you may ask 'how is the balloon moving?' Well, in each frame you can move the balloon group up into the sky a little more. Holding Shift while moving will keep the ascent straight.

Prepare for tweening

13 With the last frame of the head tilting selected, create a new frame and in this one move the balloon group clear off the top of the image.



Tweening

14 With this frame still selected, click the Tweens Animation Frames button at the bottom of the Timeline palette and choose to insert ten frames, tweening with the previous one.

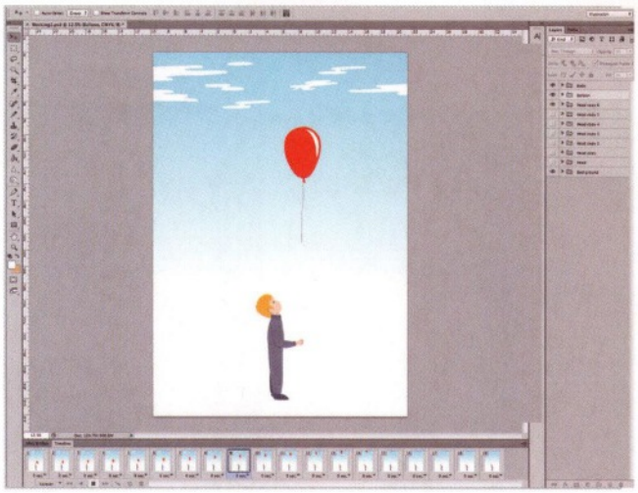
Expert tip

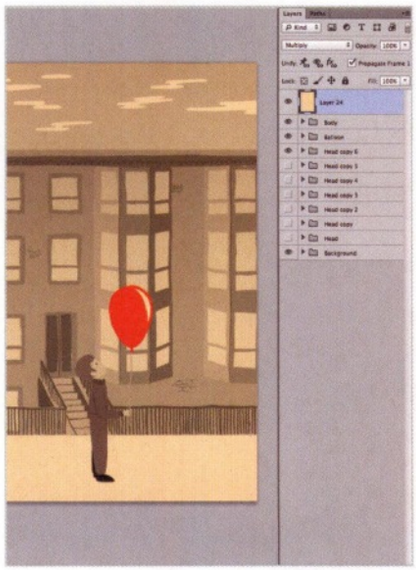
Image layering

As you're putting each part of the character together, make sure that you put the right group at the top. In this flipbook, the body group must be above the head group, as the neck has to slot behind the jumper so it can move from frame to frame without leaving a gap. The same goes for the balloon; as he starts off holding the balloon, that group must also be below the body.

Adjustments

15 Now is the time to go through each frame of the animation that you have created and nudge objects or adjust shapes to make it all run smoothly. The rate of movement of elements such as the balloon should be the same between frames.





Add an environment

16 Here's where Photoshop really outshines drawing each frame by hand. You can add in a background group underneath all of your other groups and put whatever you like in it.

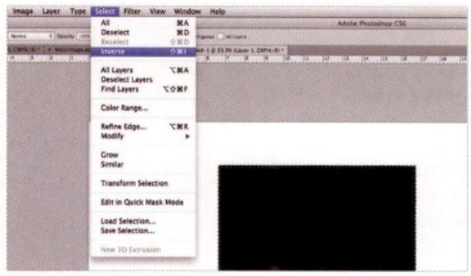
Blend it in

17 Place the supplied file 'background.jpg' in or use an image of your choice. Now change the lightness (Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation) or the opacity (in the top of the Layers palette) to make it fit in.

Edit frame by frame

18 Be careful with which elements you have selected as you make edits. Make sure that you have all of the frames selected if you want an edit to affect the entire sequence, and select just one frame if you only want to edit that one instance.

Expert edit

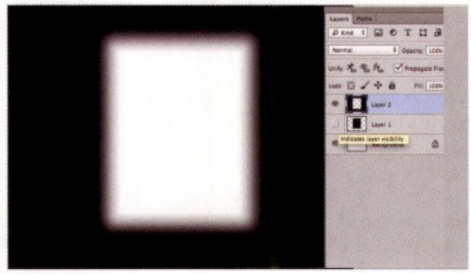


Create the vignette

Creating an even border around your image can give a lovely effect. Create a solid rectangle at the size you want for the frame, then use the Magic Wand to select this and go to Select>Inverse. Create a new layer and fill the selection with black.

Feather value

Now go to Select>Modify>Feather. How much you feather is really up to you so experiment a little, you can always undo and try a different value.



Transform

Transform the shape to fit around your image while in Multiply mode so you can see through the vignette. Try different styles to see which you prefer; you can adjust the opacity if it's too harsh.

Layer style

By changing the layer style over the top of an image you can achieve different results. Selecting Multiply will give a great overlay, but it might be too dark around the edges for you.

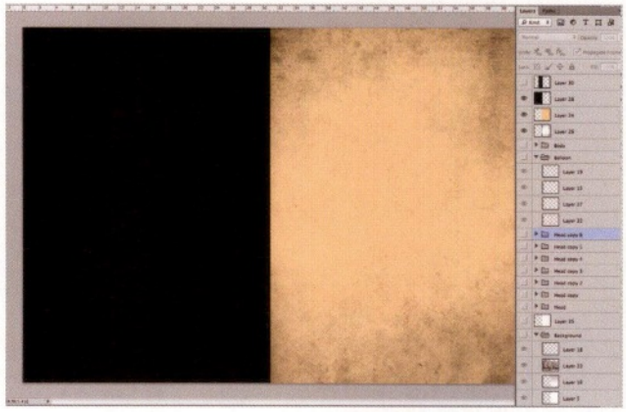
The essential tools

Rotate with anchor points

When you rotate any layer for an animation it's very important to make sure that you're rotating the image around the right apex. This will make it look realistic. Make sure you move the anchor point once you've selected transform before you rotate it.

Layer style

Textures on your image can give a vintage feel to your flipbook and often help integrate the different elements into a coherent whole. Make sure that you have the correct layer style and that your subject is positioned on top of everything in every frame.

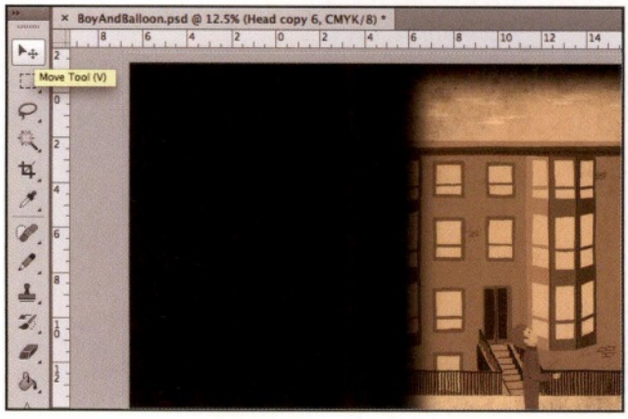


The Timeline and History palettes

Working in Timeline can be frustrating as it is quite easy to accidentally make changes to the wrong frame. To avoid having to redo work, it might be worth opening up the History palette so that you can step back to previous states if needs be.

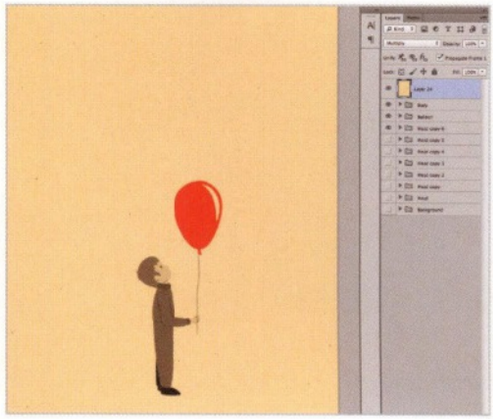
Move tool

Hitting V to activate the Move tool straight after making any modifications is a good habit to get into. You can then move a layer either by dragging it with the mouse or with the arrow keys. If you also hold Shift you will be able to move things in larger increments.



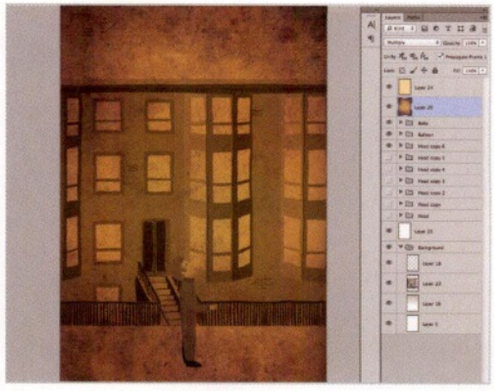
Give it a look

19 The old-fashioned vintage look is really effective on projects like this, so desaturate all of the layers except the balloon (Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation).



Multiply layers

20 Now use a texture on top of all of the groups and background to give it a grainy look. We have supplied the file 'texture1.jpg' if you want to use the exact one. Set the layer's blend mode to Multiply.



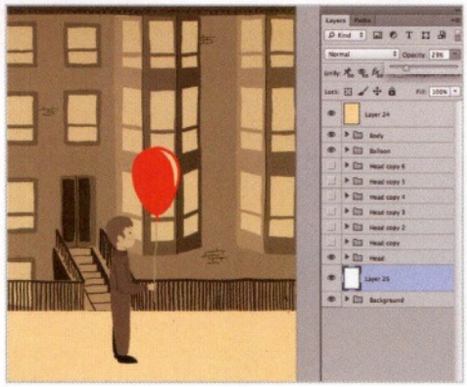
Emulating film

21 As you have created a film-like image, use a feathered frame around it to simulate the way light would go through the film and create darkened edges.

Going further

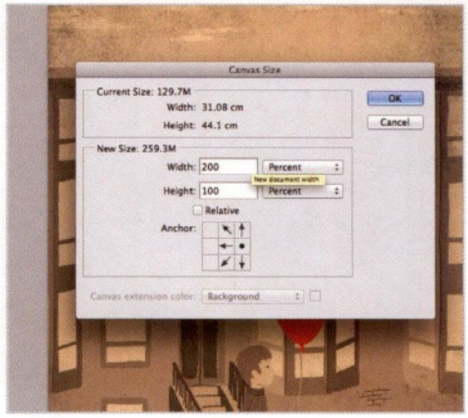
Leave a margin

Leaving a margin on the final printed version is very important, as you need to have enough space to attach the pieces of the flipbook so it works smoothly. Also, depending on which way you prefer to flick (right or left handed), it might be worth considering which side to put the margin on.



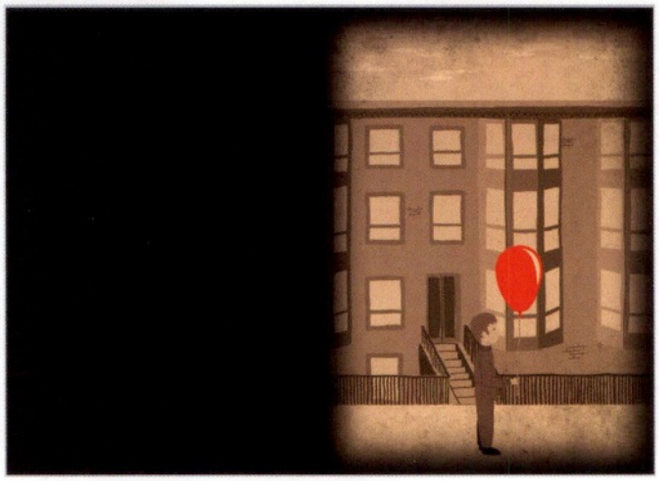
Background fade

22 To make sure that the foreground (the boy and his balloon) is visible, it's probably best to fade the background a bit. To keep this consistent throughout the frames, put a white layer above the background group and adjust its opacity.



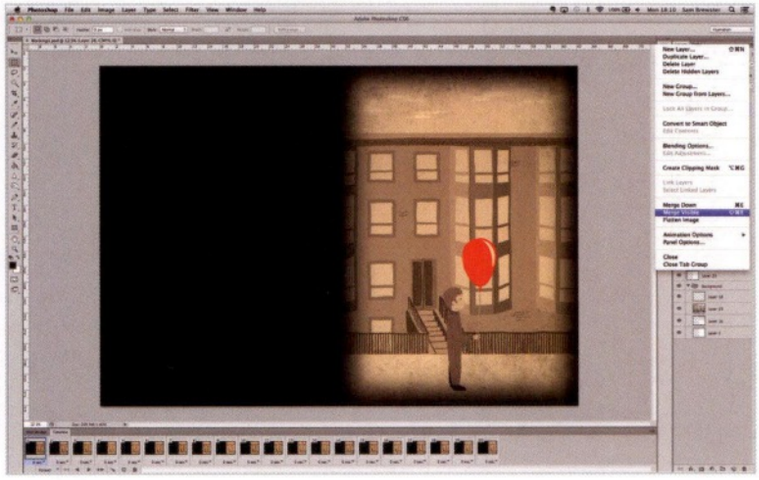
Flipbook settings

23 When making your flipbook you'll attach the pieces on one side with a margin. Go to Image>Canvas Size and make the canvas 200% wide while aligning the canvas on the right.



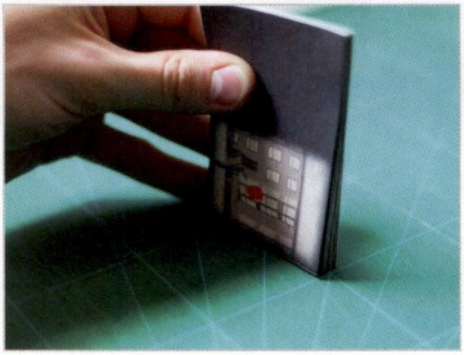
Add a vignette

24 For the final step of the image, add a vignette to keep the film look consistent. To see a detailed breakdown on how to achieve this check out the Expert Edit.



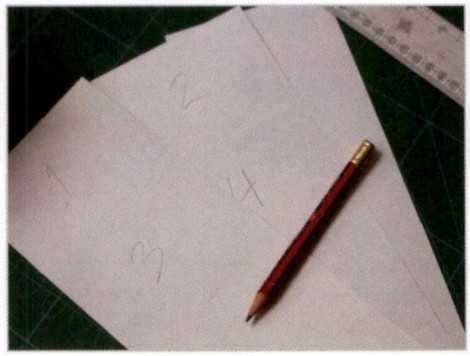
Separate the images

25 To print out all of the images separately, you'll need to flatten each frame of the animation and save it as a JPEG in a new folder. You can then choose how big to print your flipbook.



Print it out

26 To make sure that the pages have enough strength to flip properly, print the flipbook images out on slightly thicker paper than you would usually use, but don't use card as that will be too thick.

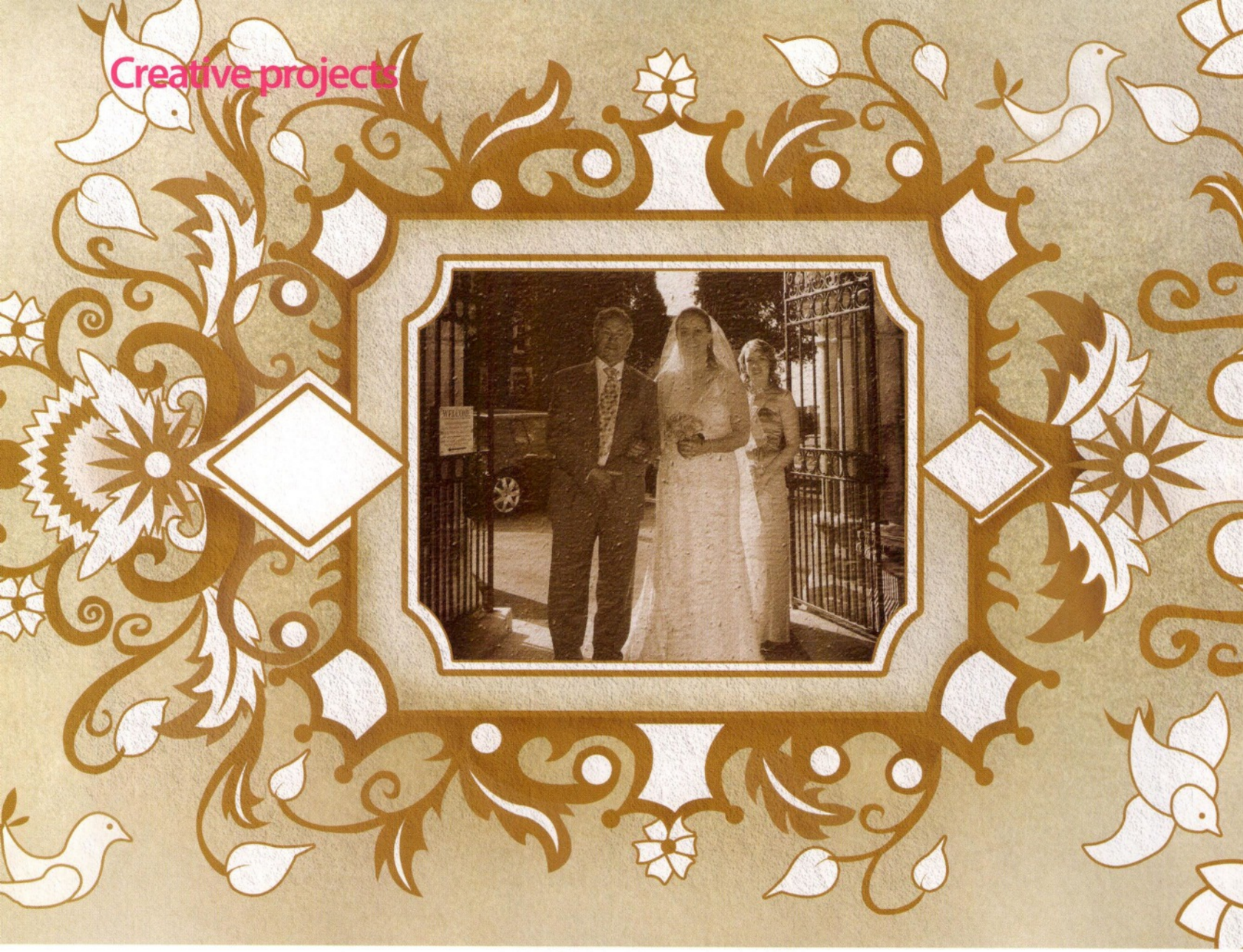


Number the pages

27 Before cutting out the flipbook pages, it can be helpful to number the frames on the back with a pencil so that when they're all cut out you can easily put them in the right order again.

Put it together

28 It's best to use a rubber band to make the pages really ping, or if your flipbook is themed in any way, you could find something relevant such as threading string through it.



Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

You will get to grips with the Pen and Shape tools as well as learning to work with layer styles

Time taken

4 hours

Make an ornate frame

Create beautiful frames from scratch to ornament your photos

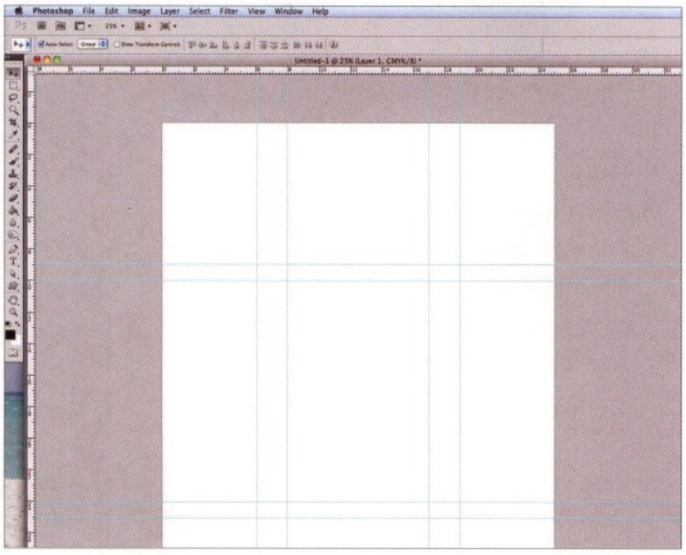
Have you been searching for the ideal photo frame for an image with no luck? Well look no further, as we will show you how to achieve delicate and ornate frames using vectors that will do your favourite images justice.

First we walk you through how to create the actual frame, and there are a few extra templates supplied free with this issue if this one doesn't take your fancy. The beauty of working with vector shapes is that the process is quick and you can easily duplicate and reuse shapes in other areas of your frame. The end result will look complex, but these pieces are simple to put together.

We cover how to age your modern photos so you can capture the vintage effect to complement your frame, before tying it all together with a convincingly aged texture on a layer at the top.

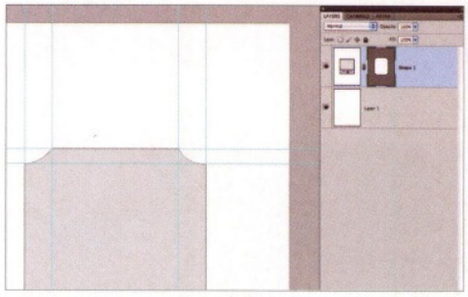
You will use a whole host of Photoshop features and tools that are available in CS2 and above, and Elements 10, so there's no excuse not to join us!

Make an ornate frame



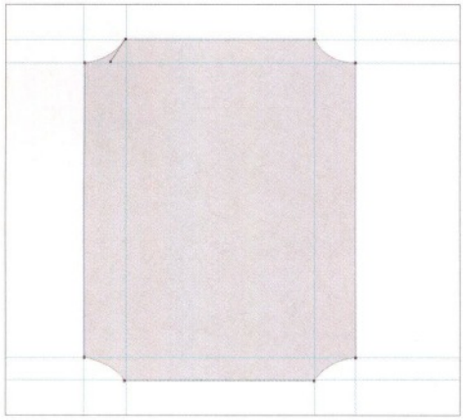
Create your document

01 Set up a new document (our template is 15 x 27cm at 300dpi to fit onto A4 paper). Make your rulers visible with Cmd/Ctrl+R (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+R in Elements), drag out from the sides and place markers for where your photo will sit. Use the rulers around the canvas to measure out equal distances.



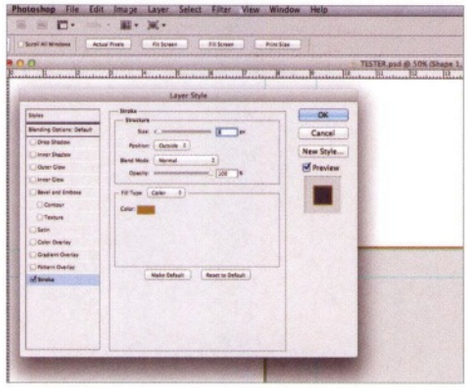
Draw straight lines

02 Select the Pen tool (P) set to Shapes in the top Options bar. To draw a frame shape. Click to place your first anchor point, hold down Shift to keep the line straight and then place your next point. In Elements, you'll need to use the presets in the Shape tool (U) instead of the Pen.



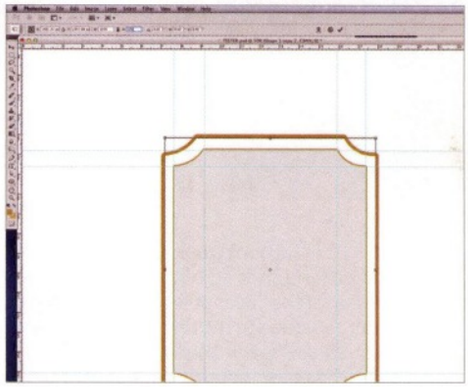
Complete the shape

03 To get the corner lines arched, click and hold the mouse, and then move the cursor to create the curve. Opt/Alt-click the anchor point when placed to finish the line. Opt/Alt-clicking makes sure the next anchor point doesn't go off at a weird angle.



The Midas touch

04 Place your last anchor point onto the first one to close the shape. Double-click on this in the Layers palette and tick Stroke. Add an 8px Gold frame, C:13, M:35, Y:89, K:19. Hit OK when done and drag the shape layer over the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette to duplicate it.



Use Free Transform

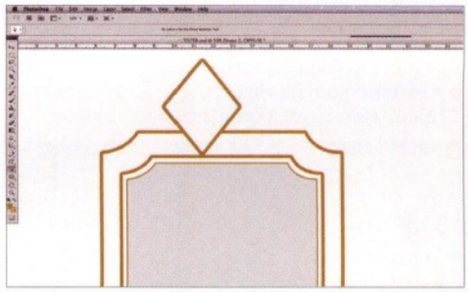
05 Working on the bottom shape layer, press Cmd/Ctrl+T to activate Free Transform and increase the Width and Height values to 105% in the Options bar. Double-click on the thumbnail in the Layers palette and make the shapes' Fill colour white. Increase the Stroke to 20px.

Realistic photos Add a photo to complete the effect

After going to so much trouble creating your frame, you can't let down your image by poorly placing the central photo. After aging your photograph to match the effect, flatten it and then drag and drop it into your frame canvas. Hide this layer for now.

Go to the hidden group of the frame layers and find the first rectangle layer you made, coloured up in grey. Cmd/Ctrl-click onto this layer's thumbnail to make it an active selection, make the photo layer visible once more and add a mask using the icon at the base of the Layers palette. If the wrong part of the photo disappears, press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask completely.

Finish off your image by selecting the Burn tool (O) and working around the edges of the photo to give a sense of depth.



Add a custom shape

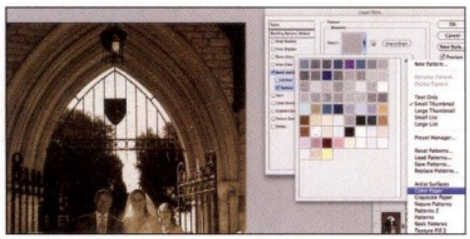
06 Duplicate the bottom layer, resize this to 120% and then select the Custom Shape tool (U). From the Options bar, choose a diamond, hold Shift to keep perspective and add a white-filled shape with an 8px stroke in the same gold used earlier. In Elements, use the colour picker with the Shape tool to fill your design.

Give it a retro feel

Add an aged look to your photo

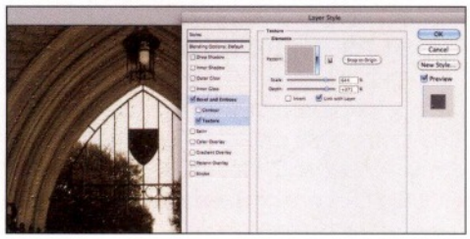
Set the hue

With your photo open, bring up the Adjustments palette via the Window menu. Click onto the Hue/Saturation option, check Colorize and drag the Hue slider to a sepia tone. Move the Saturation slider to the left to take away some of the colour.



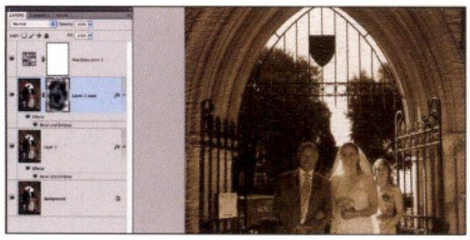
Layer styles

Double-click on the Background layer in the Layers palette and check the Texture box on the left-hand side of the Layer Style dialog. Click onto the blue bar attached to the texture preview and then select Color Paper in the fly-out menu.



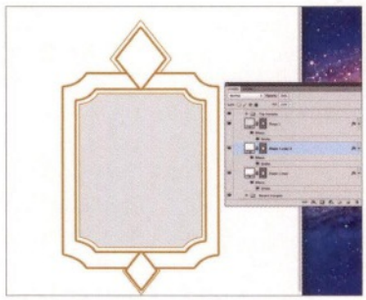
Add some texture

From these textures, click onto Beige with White Flecks and play around with the Scale and Depth values to get good coverage. In Elements you can use the Note Paper filter on a selected layer with a suitable colour fill. Hit OK and drag this over the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette.



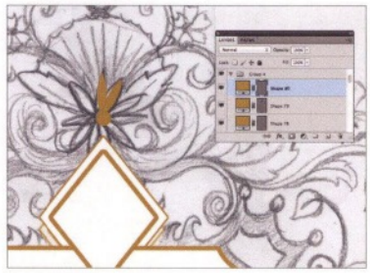
Mask away extra texture

Double-click on the duplicated layer's effect, change the texture to Buff Texture, increase its Scale and Depth and then hit OK. In the Layers palette add a mask, set your Foreground and Background colours to black and white and then paint some of the texture effect away.



Arrange the elements

07 With the Move tool (V) selected, Shift-click the shape layers and justify to centre (in Elements you'll need to use the rulers). Duplicate the triangle and scale to 120%. Shift-click both triangles then duplicate this group, move to the bottom and shrink with Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T).



Trace with the Pen

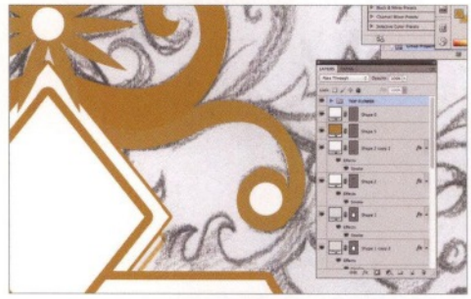
09 Use the Lasso tool to select your pattern, drag the areas onto your main canvas and reposition. Select the Pen tool set to Shapes, set the colour to gold via the Options bar and trace the first shape. In Elements you can use the Shape tools for this.

Alter the edges

11 You can edit the shapes after you've finished with the Pen tool, so don't worry if you have some wonky edges. Press A on the keyboard, click onto the edge of the shape and the anchor points will become visible. Now move the pointers or move the Beziér lines protruding from the shapes.

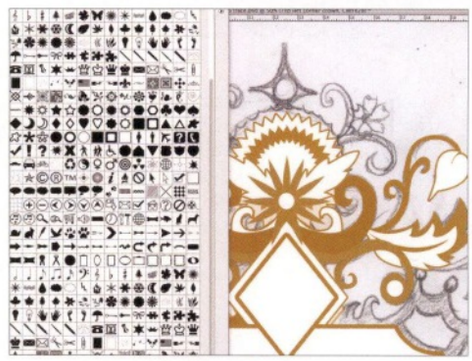
Sketch the details

08 Print out your frame so far and sketch some embellishments (examples are available with the supplied images). Once you're happy with the rough design, scan it in and open in Photoshop. Drag your designs onto the canvas and resize them so they are ready to be traced.



Duplicate and flip

10 The beauty of Photoshop is that you don't need to trace every element each time. Once you have traced one shape you can press Cmd/Ctrl+J to quickly duplicate and then go to Edit>Transform> Flip Horizontal or Vertical to position the copy into place (Image>Rotate in Elements).



Build up details

12 Keep using the Pen or Shape tools to build up your frame. In the Custom Shape tool menu you can find some lovely ready-drawn patterns. Keep duplicating and resizing the shape layers and, once you've completed one corner of the frame, simply duplicate, flip and place on the next corner.

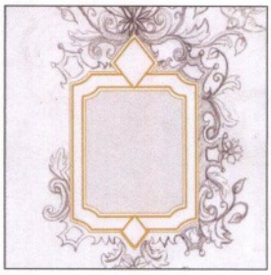
Expert tip

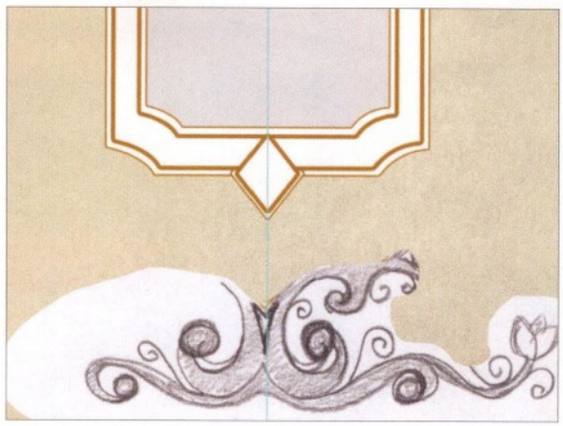
Sketch and scan ideas

Printing out and drawing onto a template, (which we have supplied for you) means you know that your designs work compositionally and you can mix and match once scanned into Photoshop.

When drawing out your ideas there is no need to draw out the whole frame design as we can make elements symmetrical in Photoshop by duplicating and flipping shapes.

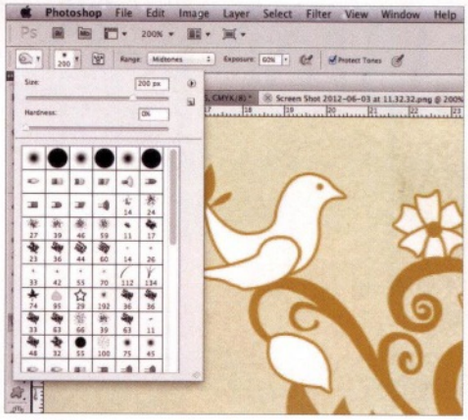
Also provided with this issue is a paper texture that we scanned into Photoshop. Drag and drop this onto your canvas and then place beneath the scanned images. As you begin to work, keep turning off the layer visibility to see how your frame is looking on the textured backdrop. If you don't have a scanner, try using a digital camera to take some suitable shots of textured paper instead.





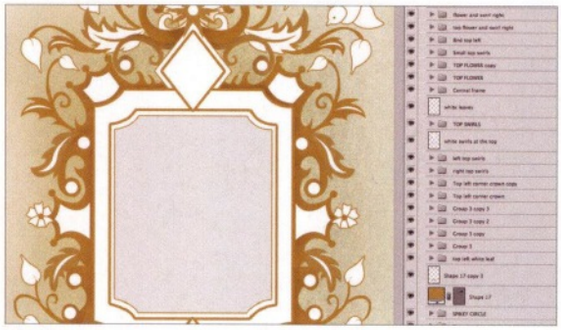
Keep on tracing

13 Vary the shades of gold if your layers are sitting very close together and try making some shapes white with an 8px gold frame. This will help add depth to the image and make it look a bit more creative. Keep tracing and working around the sketch, duplicating whole sides to speed up the process.



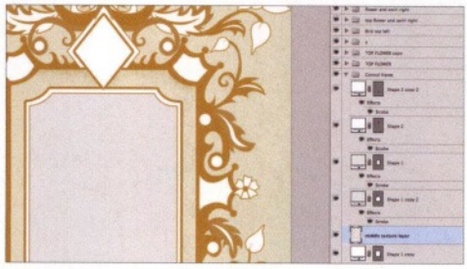
The Burn tool

14 With all gaps filled and the composition complete, add some shadows with the Burn tool (O). In the Options bar give it 60% Exposure and a soft-edged brush. You must rasterise the shapes before you can apply the Burn tool.



Rasterise and burn

15 To rasterise, Ctrl/right-click onto the specific layer, choose Rasterize (Simplify in Elements) from the menu and paint onto the canvas to add shadow. Repeat over all of the shapes that need a bit of shading for depth. Less is sometimes more, though, and not every shape will need this effect.



Add paper texture

16 Duplicate the background texture layer and bring it to the top of the stack, pressing the eye icon to hide it for now. Find the widest central rectangle layer and Cmd/Ctrl-click to make it an active selection. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I to invert the selection. Make the top texture layer visible and hit the Backspace key.

Add texture effects

Finish off with a realistic touch

Group all of your layers (or Shift-select them in Elements) and duplicate the group. Hide the copy group and merge the other with Cmd/Ctrl+E. Duplicate this merged layer, double-click to bring up the Layer Style dialog box and check the Texture box. Click onto the texture thumbnail and, from this menu, press the top-right arrow to load Color Paper. Choose Gold Parchment, play around with the Scale and Depth and then hit OK. In Elements you can use the supplied paper texture and load it in as an Overlay layer. Use a regular mask to paint the effect away from the background.

Ctrl/right-click on this layer, choose the option to make it a Smart Object and then give it a mask. Select a soft-edged brush at 80% Opacity with the Foreground and Background colour swatches set to black and white respectively (D). Now paint away the texture that appears on the background, leaving the effect just on the frame.

SUMMER FUN!
Destin, Florida

Create a holiday collage

Gather your beach photos and holiday memorabilia and create a beautiful, personalised artwork for friends and family

Summer is here! And if you're heading to the beach, don't forget to pack your camera and snap plenty of photos. It's always a shame to return back home, but the fun doesn't have to end. Gather all those photos and souvenirs, fire up Photoshop and have a blast creating a cool, scrapbook-style collage.

Photoshop is the perfect tool for creating detailed, multi-layered compositions. Follow along as we show you how to use a mixture of digitally created objects, photographic elements and Photoshop tricks to create a beautiful piece. To help keep things from looking too digital, we'll use textures, the Polygonal Lasso tool and Freeform Pen.

Once you complete this lesson, personalise the piece by replacing the photos and elements with your own. Change colours, adjust the layout – the possibilities really are endless. You can also create something entirely different using the new techniques you learned. Share your personal creations with your friends and relatives, just don't blame us if they want you to create something for every holiday!

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

How to create a digital scrapbook layout using Photoshop's selection tools, layer effects and adjustment layers

Time taken

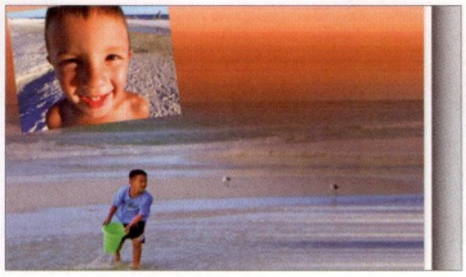
2 hours

Create the background

01 Open 'Start.psd'. We'll utilise the colours of the initial photo to create a nice backdrop. Go to Filter>Other>Offset and ensure Repeat Edge Pixels is checked at the bottom. Slide the Horizontal slider all the way to the left and keep Vertical at 0.

Blend your photo

02 Add in your first family photos. Open 'William.jpg' using File>Place, or use your own image. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All and set your Foreground colour to black. Using a round brush with 0% Hardness, paint out the top of the layer.



Add small photo

03 Use the Place command to bring in 'Mason.jpg.' Size, move and rotate before hitting Enter. Add a drop shadow by clicking on the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and choosing the right option. Keep the setting values fairly low.

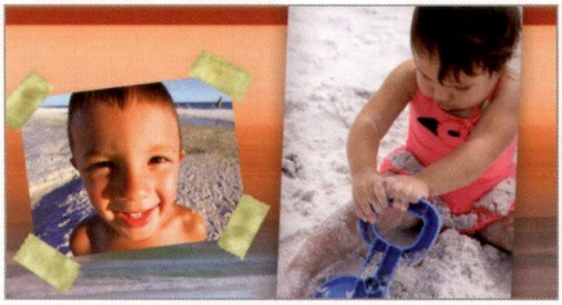
Add tape strips

04 Place 'Tape.psd' and set to Pattern Overlay (Opacity 50%). Load the Artist Surfaces patterns and choose Watercolor Paper. Tick Satin, select brown and set Contour to Cone – Inverted. Create a new Overlay layer and, using a soft round brush, shade and highlight with black and white.

Expert tip

Merge your layers

When you're making fiddly things like the drawing pin in step 9, be sure to name all your layers, then select them all by clicking the first one, holding Shift and then clicking the last one. Ctrl/right-click and choose Merge Layers to put all the drawing pin's elements onto one clean layer that you can move and duplicate later, placing it wherever else a drawing pin is needed, for example.



Add main photo

05 After you've rotated and scaled (T) your tape, Alt/Opt-click it to duplicate it three times, transforming and repositioning each piece. Import 'Lola.jpg' then size, move and rotate before pressing Enter. Add a slight drop shadow and a slight inner shadow to shade the edges a little.

Add a cutout shot

06 Open 'Cartwheel.jpg' and create a rough selection with the Polygonal Lasso tool. Press Ctrl/Cmd+C to copy. In the main composition, press Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste then use Free Transform (Ctrl/Cmd+T) to size, rotate and move. Add a slight drop shadow here too.

Create title

07 Set the Foreground colour to #f3f3f3. Use the Rectangle tool to create a title background strip and the Type tool to write the title 'Summer fun!' I used the Trebuchet font and a size of 42pt. Rotate both slightly with Free Transform.

Sunshine and subtitles

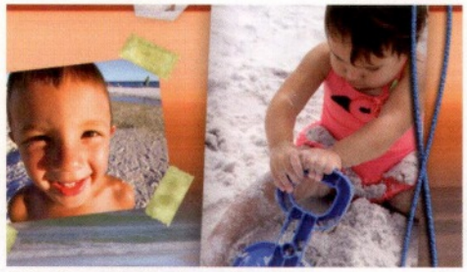
08 Set the Foreground colour to #aacccc and use the Rectangle tool to create a smaller subtitle background strip, type in a title with the Text tool, rotate both slightly and position as desired. Now set the Foreground to #fff600 and activate the Freeform Pen tool. Ensure Shape Layers is selected in the Options bar. Click and draw a rough circle then click and drag several rays.

Drawing pin

09 Draw a circle with the Ellipse tool and double-click the layer to open the Layer Style dialog. Tick Gradient Overlay and click on the gradient. Choose blue for the bottom-left stop. Repeat to create a smaller circle and place it above the first then paint a shadow on a layer between the circles with a Soft Round brush (Opacity 30%). Use the Line tool to draw the pin.

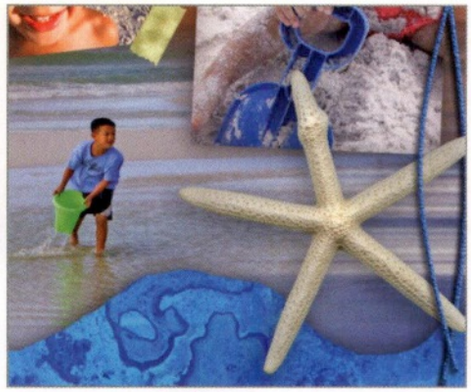
Add bottom border

10 Place the 'Border-bottom.png' image onto the canvas. Move it to the bottom and then press Enter. Refer to the Expert Edit for details for how these borders were made. Experiment with your own borders and textures for future pieces.



Make digital string

11 Place in 'String-01.png' and 'String-02.png', or create your own. Click with the Single Column Marquee tool on a new layer. Ctrl/right-click the selection and choose Stroke, with Width 20px and Center for Location. Add a drop shadow, inner shadow and bevel with texture. Use Filter>Distort>Shear and create and select points in the line by clicking and dragging them. Use a hard-edged Eraser to fray the ends.



Place a starfish

12 Place 'Starfish.png' into your document, resize and rotate. Add a Drop Shadow layer style and experiment with the placement of the starfish in relation to the two string layers. We placed the starfish in between the strings.

Add top border

13 Place 'Border-top.png' into your canvas and arrange it at the top of the composition. Now we're ready to add the finishing touches. We'll incorporate an overall texture and make some final adjustments.

Overall texture

14 Place in 'Texture-overall.jpg', ensuring that this is the top layer. Set the layer's blending mode to Overlay and reduce the Opacity to 80%. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All and then use a soft brush with black to paint out some areas, such as the parts around the faces.

Blue hue

15 Create a new layer and name it Vignette. Use a large brush (600-800px Diameter) with 0% Hardness and 10% Opacity. Gradually paint around the edges to create the vignette. Paint in strokes rather than continuous lines so that you can always undo (Ctrl/Cmd+Z) any individual marks.

Adjust contrast

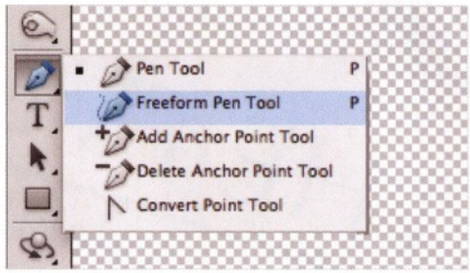
16 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels and slide the black slider and the white sliders slightly inward. Slide the Midtones slider a little to the left. Notice how the adjustment layer affects everything below it – powerful stuff.

Improve colour

17 Now go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance and move the Vibrance and Saturation sliders to the right to increase saturation. Be conservative with the Saturation slider and paint with black on the attached mask to tone down areas of the effect, especially around skin.

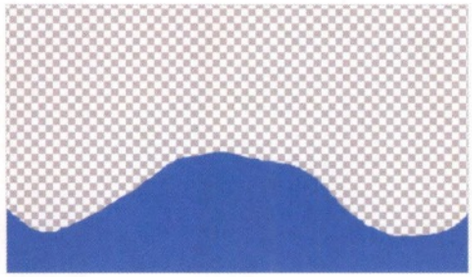
Beach borders

Add colourful, wavy edges to evoke the spirit of the sea and curvy clouds



Freeform Pen tool

Activate the Freeform Pen tool and make sure Shape Layers is selected in the Options bar.

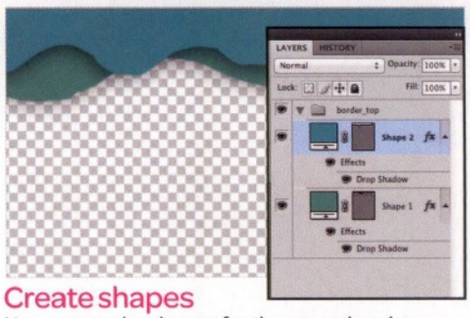


Trace around the image

Starting from the left edge, click and drag to the right edge, drawing a wavy line. Don't let go of the mouse button yet. Trace down and around the bottom until you get back to the start, then release the mouse button.

Hover between layers

Place 'Texture-border.jpg' into the layer above the mask. Press the Alt/Opt key, hover between the two layers and click when the icon changes.



Create shapes

Now create the shapes for the upper border. These don't have any clipped textures; they're just solid colours, so pick suitable Foreground hues (we used #1d8e9b and #4b8d85) and create two wavy shapes at the top with the Freeform Pen tool.

THE EVENTFUL TIMES
Family News
Free!
uple celebrates special day in supreme style
Birthday wish comes true
Graduation succ

Create a family newspaper

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Use guides, rulers, Custom Shapes and the Type tool to design a personalised newspaper

Time taken

2 hours

Design a family newspaper in Photoshop as the perfect way to tell people what's been happening in your busy lives

We can't think of a more creative way for keeping people up to date about what you've been up to than a fun family newsletter with a Photoshop twist.

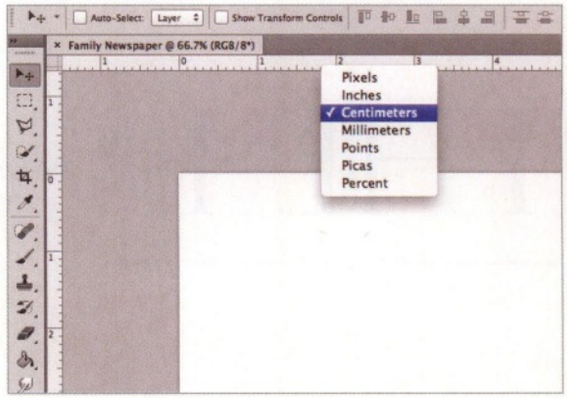
To help with the layout of this bespoke newspaper design, we first need to call upon the program's grids, rulers and guides. These allow the positioning of text and images to be locked into place and to specific measurements along the rulers. Setting up your preferences will help make things much easier as you work through the design of your newspaper layer by layer.

You will also learn how to combine Custom Shapes with masking to create a framed portrait symbol to sit at the top next to the title. The Place command proves a very useful method for opening up photos and moving them around the canvas, and we will show you how to convert the design into a Smart Object for adding extra embellishments such as a wooden backdrop.

Of course, a project such as this needs to be shared, so make sure you upload it to social networks or email it around to your family when you're done.

Blank document

01 Start by creating a new file in Photoshop under File>New (Cmd/Ctrl+N). Set the document size to 250mm wide by 160mm high, and set Resolution to 300 Pixels/Inch. Hit OK and then press Cmd/Ctrl+R to activate the rulers.



Custom rulers

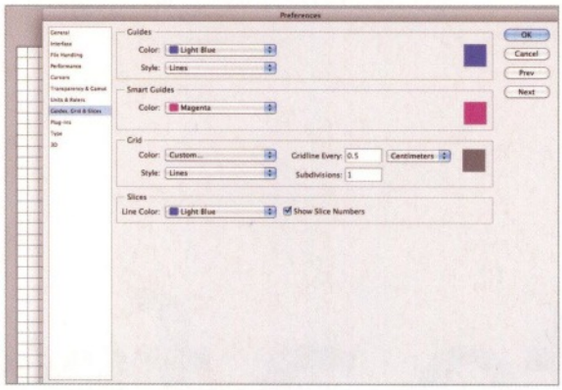
02 Ctrl/right-click over one of the rulers and change the unit of measurement to Centimeters. In the top-left corner where the two rulers meet, click and drag from inside this and pull them over to where the canvas begins. Hold Shift to accurately lock on to the top-left corner of the canvas.

Expert tip

Using stock-image sites

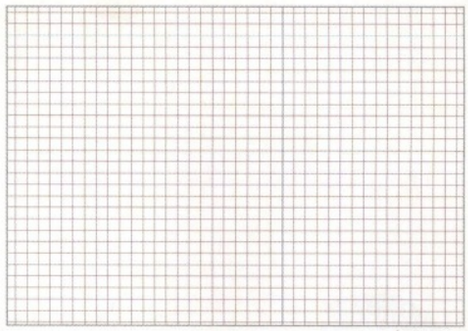
Stock sites such as **www.rgbstock.com** and **www.morguefile.com** are great resources for extra elements, such as the cup of coffee and pair of glasses.

Images are free to download and there's lots of variety to suit the layout of your design. To make cutting out objects easier, look for objects taken on a white background. Change the blend mode to Multiply once in Photoshop and any white areas there will vanish.



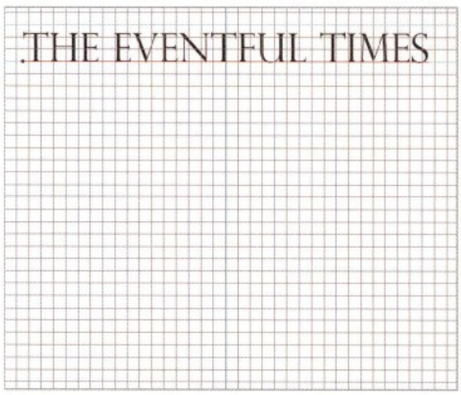
Control the grid

03 With the rulers set up, go to Photoshop's Preferences>Guides, Grid & Slices. Set Gridline Every to 0.5 and Subdivisions to 1. Hit OK to return to your document and then go to View>Show>Grid. Navigate to View>Snap and tick this option.



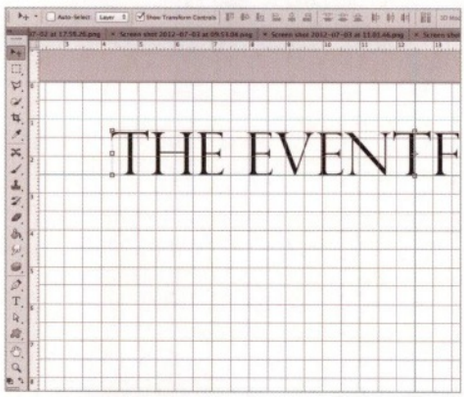
Set guides

04 To create new guides, simply click and drag from the horizontal or vertical ruler. Place a vertical guide halfway across the canvas at 12.5cm, and two more horizontal guides, one at 1cm and the other at 2.5cm. Zoom in to accurately snap the guides to the grid in the right place.



Name your newspaper

05 Select the Type tool (T) then set font to Perpetua Titling MT and its size to 45pt. Click anywhere on your canvas and enter the name that you want to call your newspaper. Drag the text to snap the base of it with the horizontal guide placed at 2.5cm.

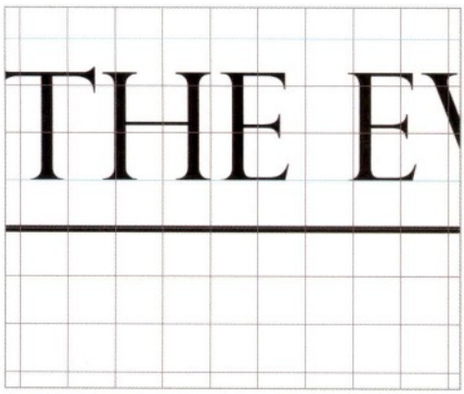


Centred text

06 Tick the Show Transform Controls box in the Options bar. This reveals the centre of the type with a set of crosshairs. Now you can snap the crosshairs with the vertical Guide that's in the middle of the canvas to centre your title.

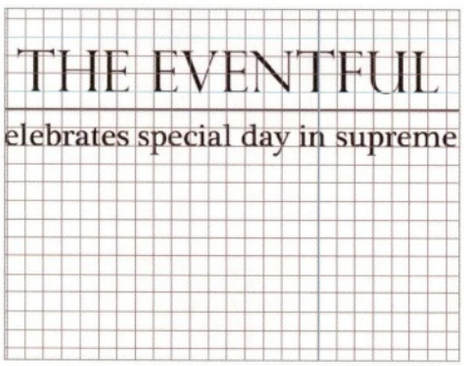
Image edges

07 Drag two vertical guides from the left-hand ruler and place them 0.5cm from both sides of the newspaper. This marks the boundaries for articles and images to sit against. Select the Line tool (U) and set Weight to 8px in the Options bar.



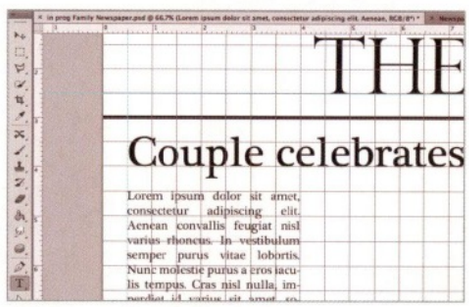
Page furniture

08 Zoom in with the grid active and, with the Line tool (U),draw a black line all the way across your newspaper 3cm from the top. With the Snap option active, the line will automatically cling to the grid.



First story

09 For the heading of the first article, select the Type tool and set font to Plantagenet Cherokee at 25pt. Click on your canvas to type and drag the text to sit 4cm down the grid just under the black line. Snap the text box to the left vertical guide.


THE
Couple celebrates
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean convallis feugiat nisl varius rhoncus. In vestibulum semper purus vitae lobortis. Nunc molestie purus a eros iaculis tempus. Cras nisl nulla, im-

First article

10 To enter the first story, select the Type tool with the font Plantagenet Cherokee, size 7pt. Drag a rectangular text box from the left guide, snap to 4cm along and 12cm down and type away. We used placeholder text to demonstrate how this will look, setting Justification to Justify Last Left in the Paragraph palette.

Another column

11 This text field can be duplicated by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J. Move it across 0.5cm for a second column of text to continue the story. Using the Line tool, draw a second black line all the way across the canvas at 12.5cm down the page.

Place image

12 Go to File>Place to choose an image to insert. Open it up and use the corner points, holding Shift, to resize the image to fit next to the text. Click the tick in the Options bar to set the image in place.

More stories

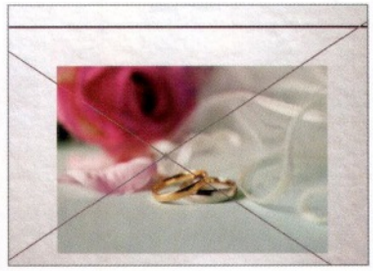
13 Add in more stories at the bottom of the newspaper design. Where titles cover two lines, open the Character palette from the Window menu and adjust the font Size and Leading values until it looks right. Press V for the Move tool and use the arrow keys to nudge the text box around.

Family portrait

14 To insert a frame in the top-left of the newspaper, select the Custom Shape tool (U). Make sure Shape is selected in the Options bar and choose a frame design. We used Frame 5. Insert the frame just left of the title and change its colour to grey.

Picture logo

15 Go to File>Place and choose a family portrait photo, for example, to go in the frame as your paper's logo. Resize the image so that it's just bigger than the frame. Select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M) and draw a selection over the inside of the frame. Apply a layer mask to the image's layer.



Authentic texture

16 To give the newspaper a textured surface, download one of the free paper files from **http://tinyurl.com/cge8wok**. Once loaded into Photoshop via File>Place, enlarge it and change its blend mode to Multiply. Lower the layer's Opacity to 50% to complete the newspaper design.

Expert tip

Remember layer styles

If you've placed your design onto a background, use both the Drop Shadow and Inner Shadow layer styles to blend it in. Do this by double-clicking on the layer to open up the Layer Style dialog. Set Drop Shadow to black with a low Opacity of 40%, and adjust Distance and Size for subtle shading around the edges. The Inner Shadow will make the paper look thicker.

Creating the tabletop

Give your design a setting

Once all the steps have been completed and you're happy with the stories, the newspaper is ready to share with the world. But there's nothing to stop you from adding items such as a wooden backdrop.

The texture we used is available to download from **http://tinyurl.com/cv4u3ex**. With the wooden texture open in Photoshop, go to File> Place and choose your newspaper design. Resize the newspaper down to fit in the centre of the backdrop (hold Shift to constrain proportions) and then hit Enter to apply. Notice how the newspaper's layer is a Smart Object (Photoshop CS versions only). Double-click on the thumbnail of this layer to open the editable version of your newspaper for making changes to stories or images.

Source files

Use the image on the disc to re-create this

Essentials

What you'll learn

Apply patterns and a stylised brush to create a beautiful book cover

Time taken

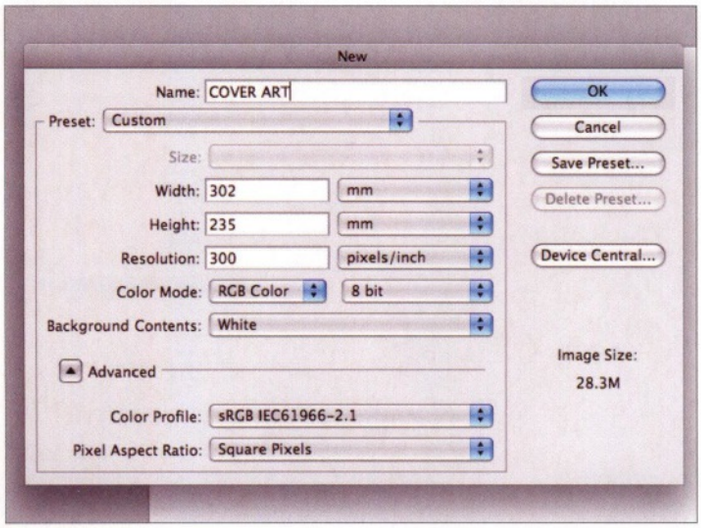
4 hours

Make a book cover

Download a template and create a book cover with your own artwork

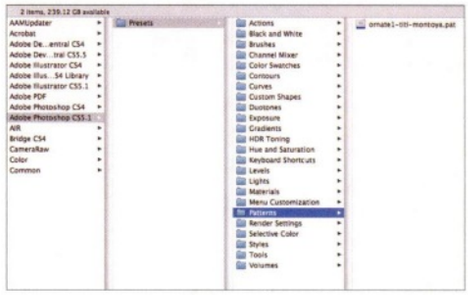
Bespoke book covers can cost a small fortune, but making your own in Photoshop can give you a unique object and an artwork to be proud of. All you need is a little creativity, a decent printer and, of course, our guide and downloadable files! You'll find pre-made templates ideal for printing so you can simply create the art, drop it into the layout and print a cover for your diary, photo album or whatever else takes your fancy!

You will learn how to download a pattern and install it into your Photoshop presets ready to use in the program whenever you like, as well as how to use a brush to create the stylish bevelled emblem to embed on the cover. You can use the patterns and brushes provided on the disc or download ones from other resource sites to follow along with the steps. Have you ever had the urge to gather your journal writings or old photos into an attractive coffee-table book? Perhaps you've got a book to self-publish and would like to avoid the expensive costs of having a bespoke cover designed? Well this is the tutorial for you.



Set up your canvas

01 Go to File>New to create a new Photoshop document. Set your dimensions to a Width of 302mm and Height of 235mm. Set the Resolution to 300 for printing and keep it in RGB mode for now so that we do not disable any of the effects.



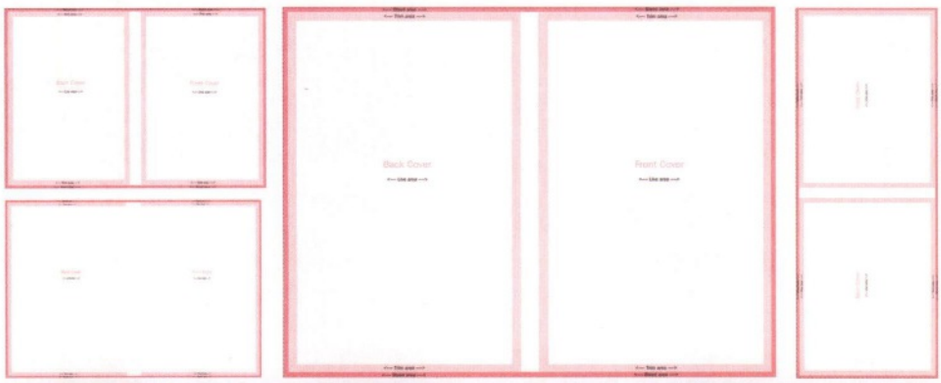
Download the pattern file

02 From the supplied files, download 'Ornate1-titi-montoya.pat'. Create a new folder somewhere on your desktop to drop your new pattern file into when prompted. It's a good idea to drop it into the Photoshop Application presets folder.

Closer look Using the book cover templates

We've supplied a range of templates for different sized books so you can print them at home

There are four different Photoshop templates supplied with this tutorial set up to a range of proportions. There are templates for an A4 and A5 book cover along with a 9 x 7-inch horizontal layout and a standard comic book. The files are set to size with trim and bleed areas marked and guides showing you where to place your finished artwork. Place your file into the template and you're ready to print.



A5 JOURNAL

If you are creating a journal or diary, this template will enable you to put an attractive cover on your everyday scribblings. On the spine you can update the year of your journal, or perhaps go into your template and adjust the Hue/Saturation layer to maintain the same cover but apply a different colour for each changing year.

COMIC BOOK

For those who desire to gather up their stories and drawings to build a comic book, this template will enable you to make a standard industry-sized cover to wrap your book in. Take one of your favourite drawings and drop it into this template to create an illustrative cover personalised with your work.

LANDSCAPE PHOTOBOOK

This template is perfect to cover your photo albums or portfolio book. For a photography album, drop your favourite photo onto the cover and label your spine according to the event, for example, Family Camping Trip 2012. You could drop in a texture such as leather to give your book an authentic photo-album look on a new layer, too, or apply a filter to do the same.

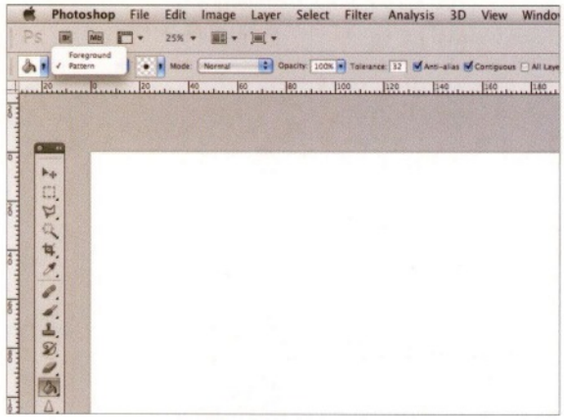
A4 PROFESSIONAL COVER

The A4 cover template is an ideal way to cover your important business documents, reports or perhaps a brochure. Build sophisticated graphics to drop onto the cover and perhaps try wrapping the graphics or photos to extend from the front cover around the spine to the back. This will give your important documents a unified and professional look.

Expert tip

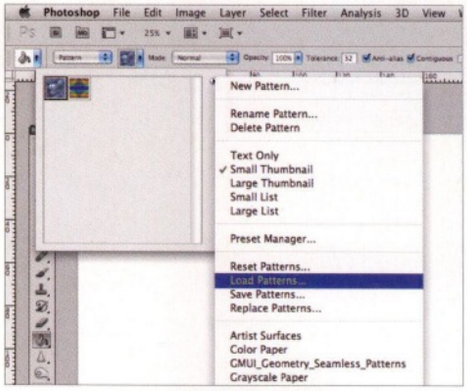
Use custom shapes

You can find custom shapes to add to your library of options and build an intricate emblem of your own. In the Toolbar select the Custom Shape tool (U) from under the Rectangle tool. You will see a drop-down menu on the left in the top Options bar, so click here to open your palette of custom shapes. Here we used one of Photoshop's presets, but you can find and download new shapes if you'd prefer. These shapes are editable vector masks, so can be easily scaled and manipulated.



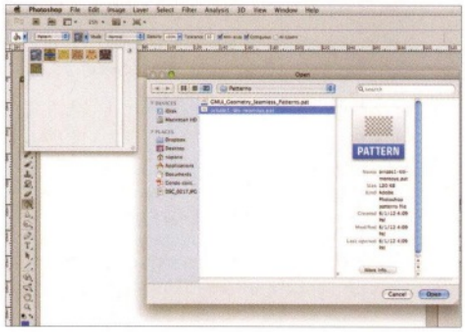
The Paint Bucket

03 Once your pattern file is dropped into an appropriate folder, load it for use in Photoshop. Make a new layer and select the Paint Bucket tool (G). In the drop-down menu in the Options bar change Foreground to Pattern.



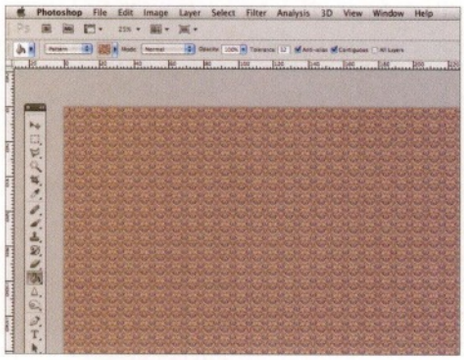
Navigate to your pattern

04 The Paint Bucket tool is a quick way to fill a space with colour or pattern. Click the pattern thumbnail in the Options bar. You will see thumbnails of all your loaded patterns. Click the arrow for the fly-out menu and scroll to Load Patterns.



Load it up

05 Load Patterns will bring up a browser window where you need to navigate to the folder created in step 2. Select the pattern you placed in that folder and press Open. This will load your new pattern into the Options bar ready for you to use.

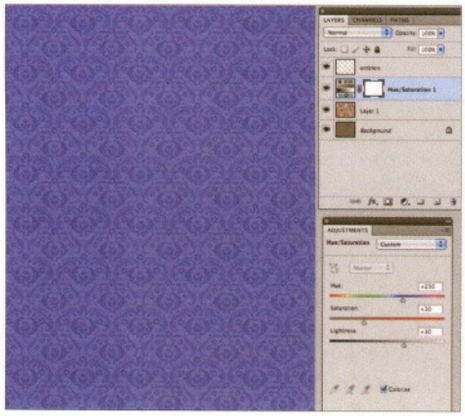


Pour in the effect

06 With your Paint Bucket tool selected, choose one of the newly loaded patterns to pour onto your canvas. Once selected, click anywhere on your blank canvas to fill it with the pattern.

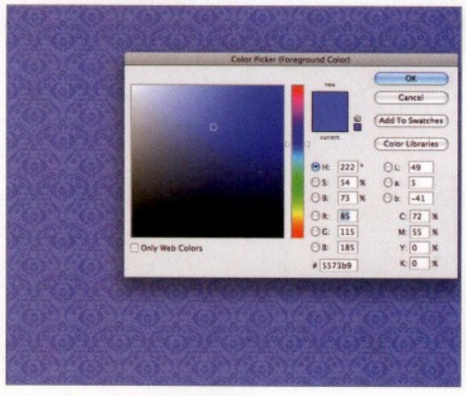
Enlarge the motif

07 With your pattern layer selected, go to Edit>Transform>Scale or just press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Enlarge the pattern layer until the details are clear, in this case the W and H values are 350%. You can use the Maintain Aspect Ratio button (the chain link icon) to make sure it's proportional.



Colour adjustment

08 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation to add one into your Layers palette. Check Colorize in the dialog box and set Hue to 230, Saturation to 30 and Lightness to 30.

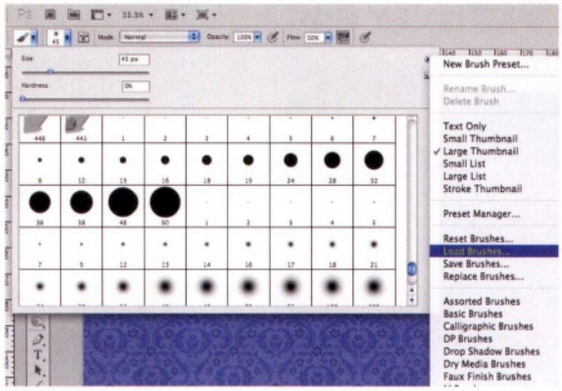


Background fill

09 Create a new layer above the Background and fill it with a colour of your choice. For this cover we are using R:85, G:115, B:185 to create a blue with a purple tint. Select your pattern layer, set it to Multiply and change the Opacity to 80%.

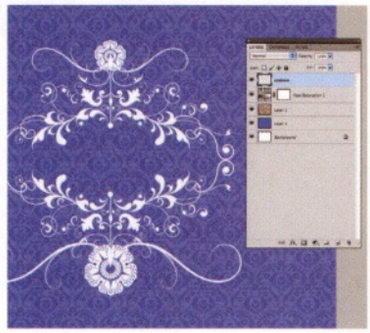
Download a brush

10 Download the supplied brush set 'Decorative 087 by Diana.abr' and save it to a folder of your choice. Select the Brush tool (B) and go to the drop-down menu after the word Brush in the top Options bar to show all the presets.



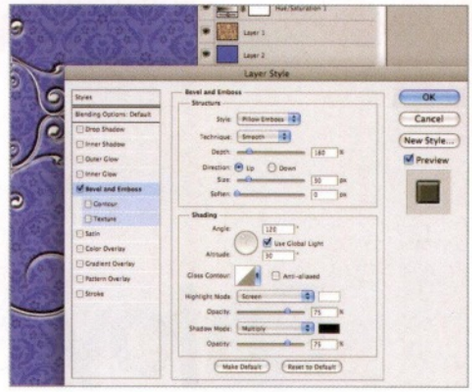
Load new brush

11 In this drop-down menu click the right arrow to open the fly-out list and select Load Brushes. Navigate to the folder where you saved the brush set, select it and click Open. You should now see the new brushes in the palette available for use.



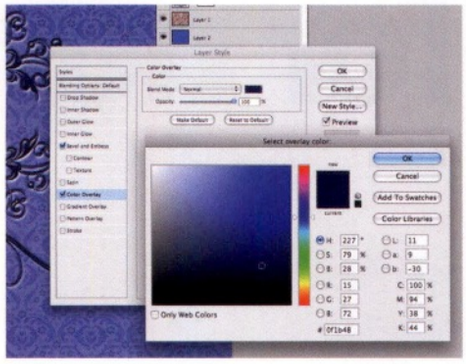
Create a stamp

12 Create a new layer and name it Emblem. Select the decorative emblems of your new brush set and stamp them onto your layout. In this case, two different brushes were overlapped together to create the design.



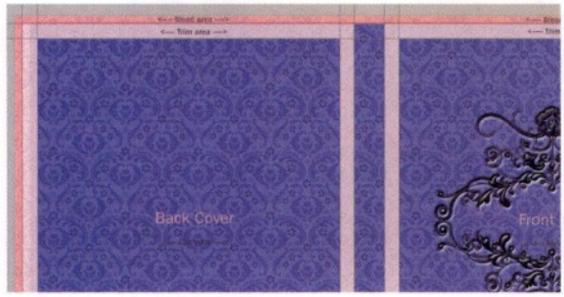
Add a bevel effect

13 Double-click on your Emblem layer to bring up the Layer Style dialog. Check the box for Bevel and Emboss and set Style to Pillow Emboss, Depth to 180 and Size to 30. Leave everything else set to default.



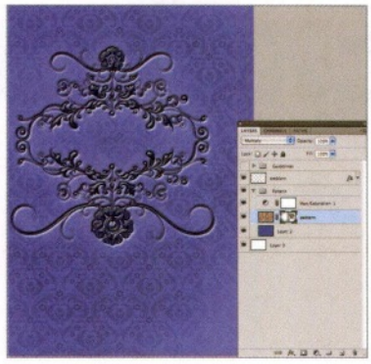
Color Overlay

14 Check the box for Color Overlay in the Layer Style dialog and click on the words Color Overlay to bring up the various options. Click on the colour swatch to bring up the colour picker and set it to a darker blue, in this case R:15, B:27, G:72.



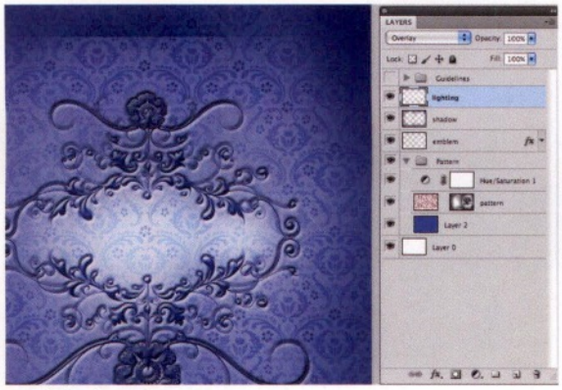
Open the template

15 Download and open the supplied 'A5 Book Template.psd'. In your cover-art file, group all of your pattern layers together by Shift-clicking them and going to Layer>Group Layers (Cmd/Ctrl+G). Rename the group Pattern by clicking on the name text and then drag and drop it into the template. Do the same with the emblem layers and use the Move tool (V) and Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to position.



Mask out pattern areas

16 Add a layer mask to the pattern layer. With a large, soft brush set to white, paint out areas of the pattern such as the corners and directly behind the emblem to give it a worn look.



Add shadows

17 Add a new layer at the top of the stack, set to the Multiply blend mode and name it Shadows. Add another layer named Lighting and set this one to Overlay. With a dark soft brush, paint in shadows on the Multiply layer and, on the Overlay layer, paint lighter areas to give more depth to the effect.

Final touches

18 With the Type tool (T), choose a font and type the title of your book onto your cover and spine by simply clicking where you want to begin and pressing the tick in the Options bar when done. To type downwards vertically, click the icon with an A and two arrows. Create the stitching with the Type tool and the ~ character. Convert the art to CMYK and you're ready to print!

Expert tip

Duplicate layer styles

There are times when you will take a lot of time and effort perfecting a bevel effect or one of the other options within the Layer Style dialog, tweaking the sliders and values until it is spot on. To save you going through this each time, you can copy layer styles to apply them to other layers and even other documents. Simply Ctrl/right-click on the layer with your effect and select Copy Layer Style. Go to the layer you would like to apply the effect to and Ctrl/right-click, selecting Paste Layer Style.

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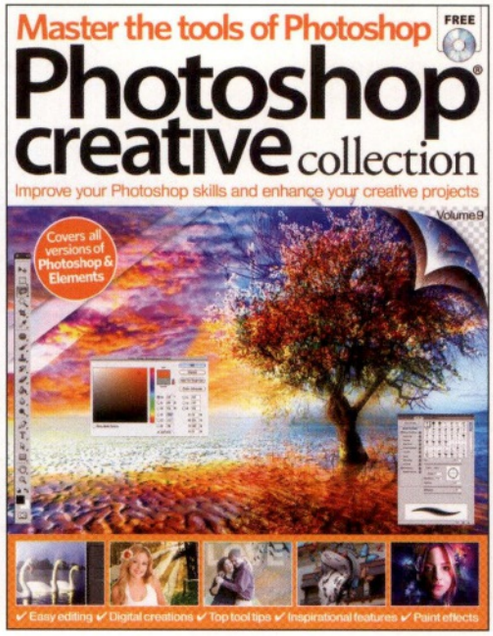
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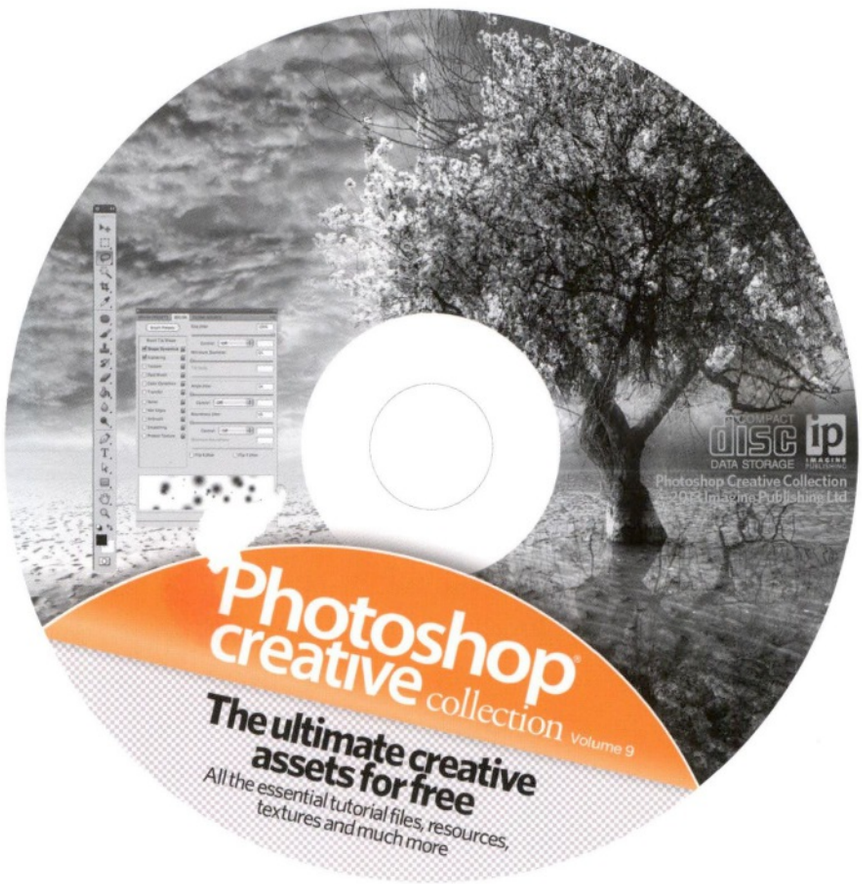
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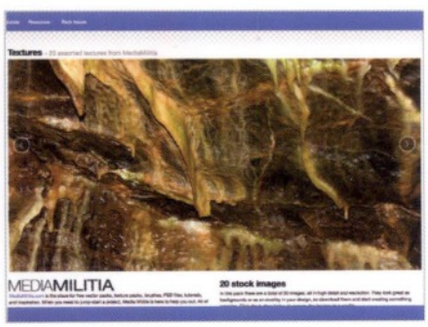

Textures

Courtesy of MediaMilitia.com, we have 20 fantastic textures for you to use on your images and designs. These textures look great as either backgrounds or as overlays.

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With Photoshop Creative and Advanced Photoshop magazines, you can keep up to date with all the latest goings on in the Photoshop world, as well as access the best tutorials.

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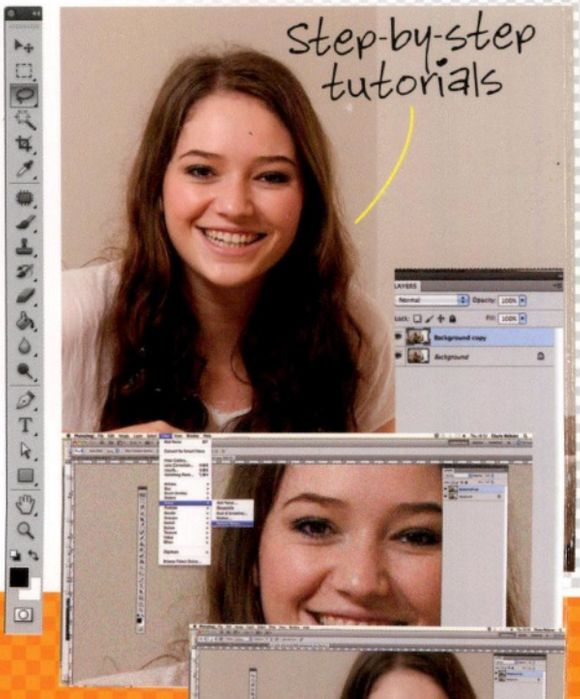

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